Allah Bux Soomro

Apostle of secular harmony

Khadim Hussain Soomro

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Apostle of Secular harmony

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Sain Publishers Sehwan Sharif

Dedicated to

Ghulam Muhammad Khan Bhurgri

A pioneer of modern politics in Sindh, a reformer and a symbol of inter-religious harmony, whose sudden death was a great loss to Sindh and for entire subcontinent.

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Prologue

There has always been a feeling among history buffs that our new generation has not been introduced to the prominent characters of pre-partition history, those pioneering spirits that devoted their lives for the welfare and prosperity of Sindh. For many years I, riven by doubt and tantalised by hope that one day, I would be able to take up the challenge and draw biographical sketches of the men and women whose inspired actions shaped the ideals of a nation. My resources were not adequate for this task I went ahead any way. First of all I introduced Harchandrai Vishindas (father of modern Karachi) and then his father Vishindas (a great philanthropist) I followed that up with a biography of G. M. Sayed (*G.M. Sayed Aadrshe-Insan sei Autar tak*). It is a brief political history of Sindh. Even so I realised I have still to go a long way because without those towering personalities Sindh's new era of political awareness and social reforms is not complete. They are Martyr Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro, Ghulam Muhammad Bhurgri, Allah Bux Soomro, Dayaram Gidumal, Jamshed Mehta, Shaikh Abdul Majid and many others. This book on Allah Bux Soomro is a part of that effort.

Throughout his political career Allah Bux Soomro adopted a secular approach and struggled for inter-religious harmony. His mind was crystal-clear about the issues of his time. He lost his premiership and his life because of his agreement with the approach of a majority of Sindhis.

In 1940 he took all possible steps to ensure his constitutional solution was made known on a nationwide basis.

During 1940 and up to his last breath on 14 May 1943, he played a marvellous role as a nationalist.

As a premier, he renounced the titles. Khan Bahadur and O.B.E. and invited the wrath of the British administration and subsequently lost his premiership. Yet he stood firm for the cause of freedom.

One of the more charming traits of Allah Bux Soomro was his childlike simplicity. He shunned protocol in all its forms. During his tenure as premier there were several instances when he abandoned the lofty pomp of his high office and chose to serve his guests. When an elderly visitor to the premier house failed to get warm water from a servant to perform his morning ablutions in winter. Allah Bux Soomro himself boiled the water and spared both his guest and his servant from the trouble.

His generosity knew no bounds. He was both friend and benefactor to all those who sought a favour from him. His guests expected and got royal treatment - often they were told to keep whatever goods they were lent as theirs. His compassion for his fellow beings was well-known and many took advantage of his good nature.

He was cultured not pompous. He maintained equal relationships with people and all counted him as a friend. His concern for others far out-weighed his own interest and when he had to choose between himself and others very often he ignored his interest.

My thanks are due to Mr. Illahi Bux Soomro, Mr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Mr. Ahmed Zafar Farooqi, Mr. Ashfaque Memon, Dr.Yunus Soomro, Mr. Hamir Soomro, Mr. Hazeer Soomro, Mr. Rochi Ram advocate, Dr. Saghir Shaikh, late Mohammed Ibrahim Soomro, Mr. Fida Hussain Shaikh, Mr. Amir Abbas Soomro, Mr. Aambar Abbas Soomro, Mr. Saqib Soomro, Mr. Nadeem Soomro, Professor Qazi Shakil Ahmad and Mr. Robin Fernandez.
For this edition I offer my heart-felt thanks to Barrister Muhammad Omer Soomro, a trustee of Haji Maula Bux Soomro trust.

Khadim Hussain Soomro

Preface

A Sindhi has a special place in human civilization because he stands for good and liberal attitude and behaviour. As such, he is always for peace and welfare of the society. His belief is between him/her and the creator. The subcontinent prior to the British incursion was known as "Sind" and "Hind". Sind was also the entry point of Islam in this subcontinent. The last ruling dynasty of Sind was Talpurs; the British Army invaded Sind in 1843 and in 1847 annexed it to the Bombay Presidency to undo the terms of Hind and Sind. Hind was broken up into a number of provinces and Princely States enabling the British to govern as this arrangement suited them.

Sind attempted to retain its identity using the vigor of Hurs under Pir Pagaro Hizbullah Shah. During 1893-1896 the efforts of Hur Militia were fiercely countered by Commissioner James, Dy: Commissioner Henry Lucas and a young British officer Hugh Dow. Same course was adopted by the three Sindhi personalities - Sayed Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro born 1909 - G.M. Sayed (1904) and Allah Bux Soomro (1900).

Mr. Khadim Hussain Soomro of Sehwan Sharif, through his serious and dedicated hard work and indefatigable research efforts has authored the biography of the above three towering stalwarts. He has highlighted their dedication to the cause, motive and role for the betterment of Sind - the Subcontinent and the human race. Historians and writers have discussed and expressed their views on Indian National Congress, the All-India Muslim League and its leadership, Mr. Khadim Hussain Soomro in a very upright way presented the thoughts and the opinions of the "Muslim Nationalists", the third ignored group.

During the first two decades of 20th century, two other

dignitaries of Sind have earned deserving mention in the politics of Sind, Barrister Ghulam Mohammed Khan Bhurgri and Seth Harchandrai (Father of Modern Karachi) played the most needed role in Sind movement.

It was on 30th October 1930 that the G.M. Sayed invited Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto to a dinner at his Karachi residence and requested them to play the required role in Sind movement. Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah presented the Sind case at the Round Table Conference held in London. He was supported by Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto.

Young Allah Bux Soomro, a son of this Sufi land entered into politics in 1923 as a member of Sukkur District Local Board and was then elected as the President of District Local Board in 1928. He was always keen to serve Sind and was elected as a member of the Bombay Legislative Council in 1926 and thus came the opportunity for him to join the Sind separation movement.

He availed the chance to form the Sind People's Party in 1934 under the presidentship of Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto and two years later in 1936 Sindh United Party under the leadership of Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon.

Sind was separated from the Bombay Presidency in 1936 under the 1935 India Act. In 1937 Sind provincial elections were conducted and Sind United Party with Allah Bux as the parliamentary leader was elected with a very comfortable majority and was thus qualified to form the first Sind Government. However, Governor of Sind Sir Lancelot Graham violated the democratic norms and procedures and called Sir Ghulam Hussain to form the ministry and also allowed him a few months to bait and win over the members to secure majority in the House. However, Sir Ghulam Hussain's Government was defeated during the Budget session as a result of no confidence motion. As a result Allah Bux Soomro was sworn in as the first democratically elected Premier of Sind on 23rd March 1938. He was a very humble person and there are many tales to confirm this quality. He never hoisted a flag on his car. He provided relief to the poor peasants and agriculturists

by introducing reforms purposely delayed by the British. He abolished Sind Commissioner's and Collectors' Darbar and Chair system. (It was at the pleasure of the buearucracy to notify the names of persons who were allowed to sit on a chair when they happened to visit the officers).

Allah Bux Soomro assessed that the gap in the performance of Sindhi Hindus (who because of facilities of school education in the urban areas occupied almost every professional position such as doctors-lawyers-teachers-engineers etc besides being traders and businessmen) and agriculturist Sindhi Muslims was adversely affecting the development of the Sindhi society. He therefore put all his efforts in the education of Muslim agriculturists. He pleaded with all agriculturist Muslim families to shift to towns, which offered high school/college education facilities. This attempt brought him in close contact with almost every family in Sind.

Allah Bux became the president of Azad Muslim Conference. This was a sour point with some Sind groups as well as the Governor and the colonial establishment. During the Quit India movement, he renounced the titles of Khan Bahadur and O.B.E. This action of Mr. Soomro infuriated the colonial administration, with the result that the Sind governor Sir Hugh Dow unlawfully dismissed Mr. Allah Bux as a sitting premier on an unjustified pretext in October 1942. As an apostle of secular harmony, he was required to play a leading role in the subcontinent on communal question in the forties. But some persons of the establishment misguided a group of Hurs that Sayed Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro was sent to prison during Allah Bux's premiership and that he was responsible for his arrest. Unfortunately the conspiracy of the establishment became successful and a group of Hurs assassinated the revered leader Allah Bux Soomro on 14 May 1943.

The factual position was that the Governor Sir Hugh Dow without the knowledge and consent of the Premier Allah Bux ordered the arrest of Pir Sibghatullah Shah on the charge that Pir

Pagaro had planned to wage a war against the British for the independent status of Sind. Allah Bux Soomro protested on the unconstitutional behaviour of the governor and on 19th December 1941 he issued a statement against the autocratic and unconstitutional rule of the Governor.

Pir Sahib was tried by the Martial law tribunal chaired by Major General Richardson, who announced his death sentence. On 20 March Pir was put on the gallows at Hydeabad prison.

For the sake of historical record excerpts from the official letters of the British are reproduced here.

> Also, the Muslim Leaguers are quite unscrupulous in the methods by which they seek to discredit Allah Bux, and all the unpleasant results of martial law are put down to his account.

(The Governor Hugh Dow's letter to Viceroy Linlithgow, 21 September 1942.)

> Dow remarks that even in Sindh the (Hur) movement is not finished and the efforts are being made to keep things simmering, with something more than passive sympathy from Hindu press and now from Allah Bux. He adds that undoubtedly Martial law and floods are largely responsible for freedom of province outside Karachi from disturbance, and present demand for restriction of Martial law is motivated by desire for political agitation in other large towns coupled with fear of swifter and severer penalties under Martial Law.

(The Viceroy Linlithgow to Secretary of State Mr. Amery, 4 October 1942).

It is a question mark for the historians and researchers as to why both the non-communal politicians of Sindh were eliminated from the politics of South Asia? Sayed Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro was put on the gallows on 20 March 1943 and Allah Bux Soomro was assassinated on 14 May 1943.

Allah Bux Soomro was aware and talked about the political scenario of the subcontinent at the end of Second World War. He condemned communalism and also the colonial rule of the British. He did not agree with the two-nation theory of Mr. Jinnah whom he met and discussed the proposal. This distanced him from Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League.

He shared his views about the Second World War and its effects on world politics, bringing in New World Order. He said all right thinking persons condemned the aggressor as a menace to human freedom and civilization. He repeatedly mentioned that unless the brutal and ruthless methods of the aggressor are checked and also the ambitious maps of all the empires are rolled up whether they are based on democratic or totalitarian ideologies, the peace and prosperity that mankind is seeking will not be achieved.

Illahi Bukhsh Soomro
Former Speaker
National Assembly of Pakistan

Family Background and Youth

Allah Bux Soomro was a member of the Soomro (Jat) clan of Sindh. The clan held sway over Sindh for more than three centuries after the Ghaznavid period and their power lasted for a longer period in the Seraiki-speaking area. During Soomro rule Uch was a centre of scholars and men of letters and Multan of Hazrat Bahaudin Zakaria was under the influence of the Soomros. also Bahaudin Zakaria had good relations with the clan. Qalander Lal Shahbaz of Sehwan Sharif also came to Sindh in the Soomro era.

Perhaps it is fitting that Soomro. one of the enduring icons of sufistic Sindh, was born at Shikarpur. His father Muhammad Umer Soomro was a contractor.

Allah Bux Soomro passed his Matriculation examination in 1919 from Shikarpur but his father's sudden death forced him to discontinue his education and. as an heir to his father's fortune. he started his career as a contractor. But as I mentioned above that he belonged to a traditional ruler family and genes were present in his body and soul for ruling and working for the welfare of the masses. so he took part in politics and started his political career at the level of local bodies.

From Political Novice to Legislator

In 1923 Allah Bux Soomro participated in the election of local board at Sukkur. He was elected as a member and within five years became its chairman. He also participated in the election of the municipality of Jacobabad and was elected its member.

In January 1931 he organised a conference of district presidents and chief officers of district local boards in Jacobabad on the sidelines of the annual farm animal festival and cottage industries exhibition. At the conference he proposed some resolutions about the powers of district local board; the delegates agreed and unanimously passed these resolutions.

Under the presidentship of Abdullah Haroon, the conference passed a resolution for the separation of Sindh from Bombay and an additional resolution in favour of the All-India Muslim conference.

Case of Sindh in Bombay Legislative Council

In 1926 he participated in the election of Bombay Legislative Council as one of the youngest candidates. His rivals were influential candidates, yet they lost by a good margin. He continued to represent Sindh there for nine years up to the separation of the province from Bombay.

In the Bombay Council he started his parliamentary career as a colleague of Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, a practical politician who had no qualms about joining the government to resolve the problems of the constituency.

So, as a colleague of Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, Allah Bux Soomro started his parliamentary politicking on this track.

On 17 February 1927, he took oath as reported in the British Library's file V/9. 2841.

> The chairman (Khan Bahadur Shahnawaz Khan, Ghulam Murtaza Bhutto, Larkana distt), then took the oath, ascended the dais, bowed and occupied the chair.
>
> **The Chairman:** The first business before the council is the swearing in of members.
>
> The secretary called out the members for swearing in. The following members then made the prescribed oath or affirmation of allegiance to his majesty the King emperor and took their seats in the Council.
>
> The honourable Sir Chunilal Mehta, the honourable Mr. Cowasji Jehangir, the honourable Mr. J.L. Rieu, the honourable Mr. J. E. Hoston, the honourable Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayetullah, the honourable Sir Harilal D. Desai, Khan Bahadur Abdul Latif Haji Hijrat Khan, Mr.Joe Addyman, Molvi Raffidin Ahmed, Khan Saheb Allah Bux Haji Muhammad Umer Soomro, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Mr. Haribhai Jhaverbhai Amin, Mr. F.G.H Anderson, Raobahadur Shanmukhapa Ningapa Angadi, Mr. Ramchandra Santaram Asalve, Mr. Atmaram Mahadev Atvane, Mr. Balakram, Mr. Jan Muhammad Khan Wali Muhammad Khan Bhurgri, Khan Bahadur Sher Muhammad Khan Bijarani, Sardar Mahboob Ali Khan Muhammad Akbar Khan Biradr, Mr. Sitaram Keshave Bole. Mr. D.R.H. Browne. Mr. Narso Balkrishana Chandra Chud, Mr. G. E. Chatfield, Sir Vasantrao Dabholkar, Mr. Ghulam Ahmed Dagumiya, Mr. Daud Khan Shalebhoy, Mr. Ali Ahmed Khan Dehlavi, Mr Balubhai Tribhovand Desai, Mr. Jeramdas Behechardas Desai, Rao Saheb Dadubhai Peshutamdas Desai, Mr. Laxman Mehadev Deshpande, Dr. Mohannath Kedarnath Dixit, Mr. J. Ghosal, Mr. Ghulam Haidar Shah Sahibdino Shah, Khan Saheb Ghulam Nabi Shah Mouj Ali Shah, Dr. Manchersha Dhunji Bhai Guilder, Mr. Framroz Jamshedji Ginwala, Mr. Narayan Ramji Gunjal, Mr.. C.S.C. Harrison. Mr. G.W. Hatch, Mr. Bhaskarrao Vithojirao Jadhav, Mr. Jairamdas Daulatram, Khan Bahadur Jan Mohammed Khan Khan Bahadur Shah Passnd Khan, Mr. Divan Saheb Abasaheb Janvekar, Khan Bahadur Haji Imam Bux Khan Ghulam Rasul Khan, Mr. Haji Abraham Haji Muhammed Jitekar, Mr. Vishwanath Narayan Jog, Mr. W. Ellis Jones, Mr. S.C. Joshi, Rao

Bahadur Siddoppa Totapa Kambli, Mr. Manjanath Devar Bhatkarak, Sir Joseph Kay, Mr. Muhammad Ayub Shah Mohammad Khuhro, Mr. Hooseinbhoy Abdulla Bhai, Mr. Lalji Naranji, Mr. Shamrao Pandurangrao Ligade.

In the Bombay Legislative Council he participated in many discussions and excelled as a deputy:

March 1928

He talked about *Begari wah, karias* and *tale.*

13 March 1928

He talked about education and said a student must complete his primary education up to class IV. If he is not qualifying and leaving school after class II or III, it is a waste of money to run a school.

12 March 1930

He spoke on the importance of barrages in reply to a question put by M.C.S.C Harrison.

28 March 1931

He spoke on the establishment of six model farms in Sindh and he criticised the government for its lack of initiative for not having opened the farms.

11 March 1931

He spoke on the demands for a development grant.

12 March 1931

He mentioned and discussed the condition of prisons and the treatment meted out to detainees.

17 March 1931

He talked about improving the system of irrigation for the common benefit of the people.

5 August 1931

He talked about *Rasai* and *lapo* and complained that our friends from Bombay Council have little concern with the problems of Sindh. *Rasai* and *lapo* are bad practices and they must be abolished.

4 Oct 1932

He talked about *Karias* and Kalari canal and further he said:

"Water is liquid money and we must handle this liquid money properly. To throw away a cusec of water is to throw away the taxes."

August 1934

He talked about a ginning factory and asked how soon it would be started. Also, he spoke on the Sindh delimitation committee's report. "We need a democratic system. Through it a member must be elected on party programme and not on individual or communal basis."

Due to his competence, he was selected as a member of many subcommittees of the Bombay Legislative Council. He was a member of the Sukkur barrage committee.

Sukkur barrage

The Sukkur barrage project is a signpost of development - akin to being a backbone in the history of Sindh. This dynamic irrigation project, built along a

modern and scientific agricultural system, provides a golden opportunity to the people of Sindh to advance their economic goals and improve their lifestyle.

Tens of thousands of acres of land came under cultivation and Sindh began to pride itself as a modern agricultural society.

Millions of landholders were reaping the fruits and benefits with sound economic initiatives and it provided a healthy atmosphere.

Beside this, agriculture-related industries flourished in the entire province and there was considerable increase in the income sources of the government.

When Allah Bux Soomro began his political career, Sindh was not fully aware of its rights and by the time he was a seasoned campaigner he played a vital role in creating such awareness.

In the social sector, he mobilised the government into developing Sukkur district. During his tenure, the district became the top most priority as far as its rate of development was concerned. In the political arena his feats were noteworthy: he with the help of other colleagues fought the case of "Sindh's separation from Bombay" until this was achieved. In 1929, G.M. Sayed then president of district local board Karachi had some differences with Gibson, who was then collector of Karachi. Allah Bux Soomro as president of Sukkur district local board along with his other colleagues of local boards supported Sayed in the Bombay Legislative Council and achieved success.

Sindh Peoples Party

In 1934 the Peoples Party - Sindh's first formal political grouping - was organised by Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto, Allah Bux Soomro and G.M. Sayed at the residence of the latter.

Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto was its first president but due to the inactive attitude of this gentleman politician, the party did not last long. Its single feat was to support Nawab Nabi Bux Khan Bhutto in the 1934 election of the Indian Legislative Council. Three candidates, Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon, Shaikh Abdul Majid Sindhi and Nawab Nabi Bux Bhutto, contested the election. Allah Bux Soomro was in charge of the poll campaign in upper Sindh and G.M Sayed was head of lower Sindh and, thanks to their efforts, Nawab Nabi Bux Bhutto won the election.

Administrative freedom and its impacts

The British conquered Sindh in 1843. Four years later they annexed the state and made it part of Bombay presidency, much against the wishes of Sindhis. This action, on the part of the British administration, made Sindh dependent on Bombay and the province lost out economically, educationally and socially.

The Sindhi leadership launched a struggle for the separation and, according to the Government of India Act of 1935, Sindh won separation from Bombay presidency in 1936. This action fuelled debate whether Sindh got separation due to the struggle of Sindhi Muslim leaders, or it was a game plan of the British. G.M. Sayed wrote in his book:

> Recalling a meeting with Sir Sikander Hayat, the then premier of united Punjab and Allah Bux Soomro in 1942, at Carlton Hotel, Karachi. When the Second World War was at its peak, Sir Sikander came down to Karachi to fly to Cairo. We discussed the prevailing scenario of the Asian subcontinent in the context of the War.
>
> In that conversation Sir Sikander Hayat quizzed Allah Bux Soomro about him joining the Muslim League. Soomro replied, "I am not a person like you, on the one hand you are with Muslim League and Mr. Jinnah and on the other hand, you are chief of the Unionist Party, which has a local secular base".
>
> G.M. Sayed further quoted that in Cairo the British war-time leader Winston Churchill asked him to convey his message to Jinnah, that he should clearly stand for the demand of Pakistan and that his government wanted to punish Congress because of its Quit India movement.

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This separation affected the whole province and Sindhi society was divided on religious lines. Sindhi Muslims believed that their interests were becoming increasingly imperilled at the hands of Hindus and also same thinking was that of the Hindus. This atmosphere shook Sindh's centuries-old unity and challenged conventional belief that held religion to be purely a personal affair.

At the time when Sindh was in chaos and uncertainty, the man who took active part in the separation movement and also stood for unity and secular approach, was Allah Bux Soomro, and he followed it in theory and practice. He also sacrificed a lot for the cause.

After the separation of Sindh, the local leadership made efforts to form a party for a future parliamentary system. G.M. Sayed called this move a struggle for a new Sindh and he has narrated the whole story in his self-same book Struggle for New Sindh, 1937 to 1947. This book is the primary source material of our parliamentary politics.

Sindh United Party

Due to the efforts of G.M. Sayed, the Sindhi leadership met at his residence under the presidentship of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah to chalk out a programme for a future party. G.M. Sayed narrated the formation of the Sindh United Party as follows:

> Soon after the separation of Sindh became an accomplished fact, those who had been foremost in the fight for separation and thereby had undertaken a moral responsibility to make the separation a real success, made an earnest effort to devise practical means for the successful working of the provincial autonomy. Be fully aware of the difficulties and handicaps they had to overcome, they put their heads together and invited other well-wishers of the province to deliberate upon the following three points:
>
> 1. To form a party and prepare its programme for the purpose of running the Government on real democratic lines.
> 2. To decide whether the said party be attached to an all-India organisation or be made independent.
> 3. To decide whether the said party be formed on communal or non-communal lines.
>
> With the above end in view, I consulted some of the leading Hindus and Muslims in the Province and sent round a draft programme in the form of a questionnaire to many people of both communities all over Sindh. After sometime, I convened a meeting at my house in Muslim Colony at Karachi under the chairmanship of Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah where the above points were considered, but no decision was reached. A programme had been prepared and a plan for preliminary work had been drawn up in consultation with Mr. Jairamdas Doulatram, but neither he nor any other Congressman turned up at the meeting, probably because in view of the allegiance they owed to the All-India Congress, they did not think it fit to associate themselves with any other party. One or two more attempts of this nature were again

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Struggle for New Sindh P. 4

made, after which it was agreed that the new party should be formed on provincial and non-communal basis and for the time being it should have no affiliation with any all-India party.

In order to implement this idea, a meeting was called at the house of Sir Abdullah Haroon, where neither Sir Ghulam Hussain nor Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto chose to turn up. Those who did attend this meeting passed a resolution affirming their faith in the principle of the proposed party on the above lines and appointed a committee, which drew up a draft constitution of the proposed party on the lines of the Justice Party of Madras and the Unionist Party of Punjab. This draft constitution was placed before the party convention, where every effort was made to bring together as many Hindus and Muslims as possible. The meeting was attended by the representatives of all Muslim groups, but, from amongst the Hindus, only R.B. Hotchand Chandumal, Messrs. Rewachand Thadhani, Dingo Thadhani and one or two others attended the meeting. At the very first meeting of the convention, Sir Ghulam Hussain fell out over the question of distribution of offices. He left the meeting and formed a separate party of his own on communal lines.

When the elections actually took place, some of the Muslim candidates contested the seats on the tickets of the Sindh United Party, which had incorporated in its programme almost all the points concerning the welfare and prosperity of Sindh. Others contested on the ticket of the Muslim Political Party formed by Sir Ghulam Hussain, while some others on the Azad Party ticket formed by Shaikh Abdul Majid. No Hindu contested the elections on the Sindh United Party ticket. Some of them stood as independents and others as Congress candidates. The result of the elections was as follows:

- Sindh United Party: 22 members,
- Congress Party: 7 members,
- Sir Ghulam Hussain's Muslim Political
- Party: 3 members,
- Shaik Abdul Majid's Azad Party : 3 members

Besides the above, there were several Hindus and Muslims who were returned as independent members. Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto and Sir Abdullah Haroon, who were the leader and deputy leader of the Sindh United Party respectively, were defeated in the elections.

THE SIND LEGISLATVE ASSEMBLY DEBATES
(Official Report of the First Session of the First Legislative Assembly)

VOLUME I – 1937

SIND LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, the 27.th April 1937

The Sindh Legislative Assembly met at the Assembly Hall, Karachi, at 11 a.m., being the First Day of the First Session of the First Legislative Assembly, pursuant to section 62 (3) of the Government of India Act, 1935.

MESSAGE FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

THE SECRETARY TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

I have to announce to the Assembly the order of His Excellency the Governor appointing a Chairman of the Assembly bending the election of the Speaker. The order is as follows:

In exercise of the powers conferred upon me by subsection (3) of section 65 and section 67 of the Government of India Act, 193.5, and of all other provisions empowering me in this behalf I Lancelot Graham, hereby appoint Diwan Bahadur Hiranand Khemsing to be Chairman of the Sindh Legislative Assembly, pending the election of the Speaker of the said Assembly, and further I appoint the said Diwan Bahadur Hiranand Khemsing to be the person before whom, until the office of the Speaker is filled, the oath required by section 67 of the said Act may be made and subscribed.

Government House, Karachi
27 April 1937

L. Graham
Governor of Sindh

(Diwan Bahadur Hiranand Khemsingh then ascended the dais, bowed to the Assembly, and took his seat.)

SWEARING IN

CHAIRMAN: The honourable members of this House are, I hope, fully aware of the provisions of section 67 of the Government of India Act, which lays upon them an obligation of making oath of allegiance to His Majesty the King Emperor of India. I myself have made the oath before His Excellency the Governor and I have been ordered by His Excellency to administer a similar oath to the members of this Assembly. The secretary will call out the name of each and every member of the Assembly. And then the honourable member will leave his seat, come up before the table of the secretary to the Assembly, make an oath, come over and shake hands with me, go back and sign his name in the roll of members. Then he will go back to his seat. That is the procedure, and I now call upon the secretary to the Assembly to read out one by one the names of the honourable members.

(The secretary called out the names of members for swearing in.)

The following members then made the prescribed oath or affirmation of allegiance to His Majesty the King-Emperor and took their seats in the Assembly:

The Honourable Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, Kt. K.C.S.I

The Honourable Mukhi Gobindram Pritamdas.

Mr. R.K. SIDHWA: I find it is the practice in all the Councils that the text of the oath is given to the member in advance, so that he reads it and then comes to you and shakes hands with you. I do not see any reason why we should not have followed the same practice here, so that the members of this Assembly might know in advance what is the text of the oath.

CHAIRMAN: Very well. I will now ask the secretary to read out the form of oath.

(The secretary then read out the form of oath.)

CHAIRMAN: I hope the honourable member is now satisfied.

Mr. M.H. GAZDAR: Is there any objection to a Sindhi translation of the oath being read?

CHAIRMAN: No.
(The secretary read out the Sindhi translation of the oath.)

Dr. POPATLAL A. BHOOPATKAR: Is a Hindi translation available? There are some members who understand neither English nor Sindhi. Therefore, it is necessary to have a Hindi translation for their benefit.

CHAIRMAN: If there is any gentleman who will come up and say that he understands neither English nor Sindhi but only Gujarati, for instance, then we will take care of him.

Dr. POPATLAL A. BHOOPATKAR: Sir, Hindi is the *lingua franca* of India. So we should have a Hindi translation.

CHAIRMAN: If there is any member who particularly requires a Hindi translation of the oath, we will facilitate his work.

The following members were then sworn in:

The Honourable Mir Bandeh Ali Khan Mir Haji Muhammad Hussain Khan Talpur.

1. Mr. Abdul Majid Lilaram Shaikh.
2. Mr. Abdul Sattar Abdul Rahman.
3. Mr. Akhji Ratansing Sodho.
4. K.S. Allah Baksh Khudadad Khan Gabol.
5. K.B. Allah Baksh Muhammad Umar, O.B.E.
6. S.B. Mir Allahdad Khan Imam Baksh Khan Talpur.
7. K.B. Haji Amir Ali Tharo Khan Lahori.
8. Mr. Arbab Togachi Mir Muhammad.
9. Mr. Bhojsing Gurdinomal.
10. Mr. Dialmal Doulatram.
11. Mr. Doulatram Mohandas.
12. Mr. Ghanshyam Jethanand Shivdasani. (Cheers.)
13. Mr. Ghanumal Tarachand.
14. Mir. Ghulam Ali Bandeh Ali Khan Talpur.
15. Mir. Ghulam Allah Khan Mir Haji Hussain Baksh Khan.
16. Makhdum Ghulam Haider Makhdum Zahir-ud-din.
17. Pir Ghulam Hyder Shah Sahibdino Shah. (called absent.)

18. K.B. Ghulam Muhammad Abdullah Khan Isran.
19. Mr. Ghulam Murtaza Shah Muhammad Shah Sayed.
20. K.B. Ghulam Nabi Shah Mouj Ali Shah, M.B.E.
21. R.S. Gokaldas Mewaldas.
22. Mr. Hassaram Sunderdas.
23. Dr. Hemandas Rupchand Wadhwani.
24. Mr. Hotchand Hiranand.
25. Mr. Pir Illahi Bakhsh Nawaz Ali.
26. Mr. Issardas Varindmal.
27. K.S. Jaffer Khan Gul Muhammad Khan Burdi.
28. Mr. Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta.
29. Jam Jan Muhammad Khan Muhammad Sharif Junejo.
30. Mrs. Jenubai Ghulam Ali Allana.
31. Miss Jethibai Tulsidas Sipahimalani. (Cheers.)
32. K.B. Kaiser Khan Ghulam Muhammad Khan.
33. Mr. Khair Shah Imam Ali Shah Sayed. (called absent.)
34. Col. H.J. Mahon.
35. Mr. Miran Muhammad Shah Zainulabdin Shah.
36. Mr. Muhammad Ali Shah Allahando Shah Sayed.
37. K.B. Muhammad Ayub Shah Muhammad Khan Khuhro.
38. Mr. Muhammad Hashim Faiz Muhammad alias Faiz Gazdar.
39. Mir. Muhammad Khan Nawab Ghaibi Khan Chandio.
40. Mr. Muhammad Usman Muhammad Khan Soomro.
41. Mr. Muhammad Yusuf Khan Bahadur Khair Muhammad Khan Chandio.
42. Mr. Naraindas A. Bechar.
43. Mr. Newandram Vishindas.
44. Mr. Nihchaldas Chatomal.
45. Mr. Nur Muhammad Shah Murad Ali Shah Sayed.
46. Mr. D.N. O'Sullivan.
47. Mr. Partabrai Kaisukhdas.
48. Dr. Popatlal A. Bhoopatkar.
49. Mr. G.H. Raschen.
50. Mr. Rasul Bakhsh Khan Muhammad Bakhsh Khan Uner.
51. K.S. Rasul Bakhsh Shah Mahbub Shah.
52. Mr. Rustomji Khurshedji Sidhwa.

Mr. R.K. SIDHWA: Mr Chairman, I have read my Oath of allegiance as desired by you. I am also asked to touch Avasta book. This is neither a Court of Justice nor a house of law. This is merely a house of political game that is to be played. I do not know why it is necessary that our religious book should be touched.

CHAIRMAN: You are at liberty to affirm and take.

Mr. R.K. SIDHWA: I have done that. My colleague Mr. Jamshed Nusserwanji was not asked to touch the Avasta .

THE CHAIRMAN: He affirmed in solemn oath. 27 April 1937

Mr. R.K. SIDHWA: I shall also affirm in that case on solemn oath.

53. Mr. Shamsuddin Khan Abdul Kabir Khan.
54. Mr. Sitaldas Perumal.
55. K.S. Sohrab Khan Sahibdino Khan Sarki.
56. Mir. Zenuldin Khan Sunder Khan Sunderani

CHAIRMAN: I believe every member of the Assembly has been sworn. But if, through an oversight, any name has been omitted, will the honourable gentleman, whose name has not been called out, kindly say whether he has not been sworn?

There is no such member.

The governor called Sir Ghulam Hussain to form the ministry even though Hussain's Muslim Political party had only three members in the House of sixty. G. M. Sayed's comments carry with lucid detail the political shenanigans of that time.

As party government had been previously unknown in Sindh and public opinion was almost non-existent, even those who had returned on party tickets owed their success more to their personal influence than to any declared principle or conviction. It appeared that they had joined a particular group only because it had suited their personal convenience to do so. It was the Congress candidates and Shaikh Abdul Majid alone who were returned on the strength of public opinion.

Thus provincial autonomy did not start under any auspicious circumstances in Sindh. It received a heavy blow even at the moment of its inception, when taking advantage of the absence of public opinion and political consciousness in Sindh, its Governor Sir Lancelot Graham conveniently cast the fundamental principle of

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Struggle for New Sindh P.5

democracy to the winds and summoned Sir Ghulam Hussain to form the Ministry, although he commanded the strength of only 3 members, namely Sir Ghulam Hussain, K.B. Khuhro and Mir Bandeh Ali Khan out of a total membership of 60. Armed with this trump card, so generously placed in his hands by the Governor, Sir Ghulam Hussain did not find it difficult to win over the Hindus by offering them one ministership and also the speakership. This bait sufficed for the Hindu Independent Party to forget its principles and ignore the future. The rich bargain that Sir Ghulam Hussain offered them in the form of more than their due share of offices led them to cast their lot with him. On the other hand, the Mir group was another victim of the same temptation and when offered a seat in the Cabinet, they readily agreed to join Sir Ghulam Hussain and left the Sindh United Party in the lurch. This was how the first so-called popular government was formed in Sindh.

The Burden of Opposition

The Sindh United Party under the leadership of K.B. Allah Bux sat on the opposition benches with the following ideals to guide them in their function:

1. To criticise Government on sound lines so as to create public opinion and political consciousness in Sindh.
2. To awaken Government to its defects and persuade it to eradicate the same.

   In order to achieve the above objects, the following line of action was laid down:

   - To carry on criticism by way of speeches, interpolations, cut motions and resolutions inside the Assembly.
   - To organise public meetings at various places throughout Sindh, so as to train the masses and educate them on the political affairs of the Province.

As at that time both the Congress and the Sindh United Party were sitting on the opposition benches and had an identical outlook they worked hand in hand.

Sir Ghulam Hussain, undemocratically imposed as the premier of Sindh by Lancelot Graham, the governor of Sindh, was aware of the inherent weakness of his position. For the time being, he realised that he was fairly secure of the majority, but, due to the individual or group demands, he knew that this could never be the real source of strength for any one. These circumstances compelled him to enlist the support of the Sindh United Party and for this purpose he approached Sahibzada Abdul Sattar Jan Sarhendi for help to decide the matters with Sindh United Party. Sarhendi accepted his request and with a keen eye to resolve the matter he intervened and struck an agreement between Sir Ghulam Hussain and the Sindh United Party.

According to this agreement, the working committee had been formed to advice and guide the ministry in legislative measures and other matters of principle and policy.

In the course of time the following satisfactory results were witnessed within a few months.

1. Exemption of grazing fees from revenue lands.
2. Reduction of grazing fees in forests
3. Recovery of *Taccavi* loans on easy installments and reduction and in some cases exemption of over due interest accrued thereon.

This coalition was running smoothly and progress was steady but as I mentioned above that Sir Ghulam Hussain's allies were not sincere enough with him and new circumstances presented itself. Makhi Gobindram who was member of the cabinet had to resign owing to private reasons and some other Hindu had to be appointed as minister in his place. Against the wishes of the Hindu group, which was supporting Nihchaldas C. Vazirani as ministerial candidature, Sir Ghulam Hussain preferred Dr. Hemandas Wadhwani for ministership in his cabinet.

The death of the speaker of Sindh Assembly, Mr. Bhojsingh, was another occasion when the Hindu Independent group felt unease. The man nominated by Sir Ghulam Hussain to replace Bhojsingh as speaker was none other than Sayed Miran Muhammad Shah. The nomination sent a wave of shock through the Hindu Independent group. However, this was the wish of Sir Ghulam Hussain and his group but the Hindu Independent group wanted to retain this post for their community and set up Pamnani as their candidate for the post of speaker. Sayed Miran Muhammad Shah was elected the new speaker though. The Hindu Independent group felt that Sir Ghulam Hussain had

betrayed the agreement that a Muslim should be premier and that a Hindu would assume the post of speaker.

The second drawback of Sir Ghulam Hussain was his age and his mental development – factors that inhibited his status as an independent-minded government servant or legislator. He was not able to run the province properly according to popular expectation. Rather, he remained under the shadow of British colonial influence.

The third drawback of Sir Ghulam Hussain was that as a premier he was unable to control the civil bureaucracy. The bureaucracy was habituated to practice as it did in the old days before separation when it exercised more power under non-democratic British rule. Most civil servants had no concern for the problems of masses and with the full support of the Governor created hindrances in the matters of legislation and ministries. However, the Sindh United Party's leaders felt that this situation would be detrimental for the democratic system. Allah Bux Soomro, G.M. Sayed, Shaikh Abdul Majid and Miran Muhammad Shah thought about the scenario in a meeting and came to the decision that in order to infuse the needed element of life and initiative into the existing cabinet the number of ministerial nominees should be increased from 3 to 6. Consequently new ministers K.B. Allah Bux, K.B. Khuhro and Nihchaldas Vazirani would be inducted.

They sent their recommendation to Sir Ghulam Hussain through Shaikh Abdul Majid. In reply, Sir Ghulam Hussain said their decision needed the concurrence of the Sindh United Party.

The leadership of Sindh United Party called a meeting and the party officially approved the decision of the leadership and communicated the same to Sir Ghulam Hussain. The premier himself agreed in principle but the governor showed some reluctance and before agreeing to increase it from 3 to 5. This equation was not in favour of

the Muslims and through this decision their strength was reduced to 3/5.

The Assembly met for the budget session in March 1938. The Congress, the Hindu Independent group and Sindh United Party with their coalition broke up the ministry. Sir Ghulam Hussain made a last-ditch attempt to save his position. The governor, however, did not approve his proposal and the situation compelled Ghulam Hussain to quit office.

Allah Bux Soomro formed the new ministry in his capacity as the parliamentary leader of the Sindh United Party and opposition leader in the Assembly with the assistance of the Congress and the Hindu Independent group.

On the disassociation of Sindh United Party J.H. Garret's report to the Viceroy.

Translation of a document presented to the Hon'ble Mir Bandeh Ali Khan Talpur on 18.03.38

> The leaders of the coalition party of the Sindh Assembly..
> We the under signed members of the Sindh United Party tender resignation from your party. The programme and principles, on the basis of which we joined, have not been realised, and in regard to these we shall issue a detailed statement. Even in such on ordinary matters as the attitude of officials no change has been brought about
> 18th March 1938
>
> G.M. Sayed
> Muhammad Usman Soomro
> Ghulam Nabi Shah
> Pir Illahi Bux
> Allah Bux
> Burdi Jaffar Khan
> Khair Shah

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Sindh Secretariat Karachi
9th April 1938

The change of ministry is generally well received by the public. The opposition tried to create stir against the government by raising the cry of `Islam in danger` but have apparently thought better of it, as the cry has since been repudiated.

Yours sincerely,
H.K. Kirpalani

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First Tenure as Premier

Allah Bux Soomro was sworn in as the premier on 23rd March 1938 and he expressed the hope that he would be able to run the province smoothly.

Statement of Soomro in the Sindh Assembly about his programme for the welfare of the province and its inhabitants.

Premier's Statement of Government Policy

THE HONOURABLE K.B. ALLAH BAKHSH:

As promised, I place before this Honourable House, as briefly as I can, the programme in regard to some of the items to which we, as a Government, attach importance and which, with the goodwill and support of this Honourable House, we hope to carry out as early as possible. I am sure the House will appreciate that we have not been able, within the short time available to us, to go through all the papers so as to enable us to express the views of the Government on several other questions affecting the welfare of this Province. We hope that, with sympathetic criticism and cooperation of the electorate generally and of this House particularly, we shall be able to contribute something tangible to the material and moral progress of the province and the welfare and prosperity of its people.

First and foremost, we feel that this province cannot remain unaffected by the tidal wave of national awakening that has swept our country during the last few years and particularly during the last Assembly elections. The national aspirations of the people of this country in accordance with the peculiar needs and circumstances of this province shall therefore guide us. The programmes of the Indian National Congress and of the parties that have helped to form this Government have long been before the people of this province. There is no doubt that there are many items in the programme of the Congress, which the public in Sindh appreciate and support. It will be the

duty of my Government to carry out these items, having regard to the circumstances of the province. In regard to the various proposals for legislative and administrative reform, my Government will, however, be guided by the merits of the proposals and not by the fact that they proceed from any particulăr party.

In this connection, I wish to make clear one matter on which there might be some misunderstanding. My Government has come into being on no terms of bargaining with any other party. The undertaking we have given to our friends and supporters are which I now repeat, is that we shall run the administration on broad national lines so as to enable the people of the province to enjoy the fruits and benefits of the transference of power from an irresponsible executive to the representatives of the people. I hope the honourable members within this House, and the public outside, will judge us by our deeds and not by anything else.

The peculiar characteristic of this province is that it does not stand on its own legs, but depends for its existence upon subventions from the Central Exchequer. In this connection we have already contended in this Assembly that the figures on which the subvention was based have already been proved to be incorrect, and that further enquiry is necessary to ascertain what is the utmost payment that can fairly be demanded of Sindh. We propose therefore to place our views before the Government of India and the secretary of state. and I can only hope that a satisfactory solution of the problem will be reached in the near future.

The next most important problem before us is the condition of landholders and others dependent upon agriculture on inundation canals taking off below the barrage. I am fully conscious of the deplorable condition to which these tracts have been reduced in recent years. They have our fullest sympathy, and we shall do all we can to improve the lot of the sufferers in those parts. With a view to do what is possible, my Government proposes to appoint a special officer to examine and report upon the feasibility of constructing a weir at Jherruck or elsewhere

and to suggest other ways and means to restore as far as possible conditions in these parts to what they were in years gone by.

Consistent with their policy, my Government does not propose to bring to bear on the subject the mere question of economic return on the investment made, but wish to consider the desirability of the scheme, having regard to the welfare of the people as a whole. My Government wishes that due attention in this matter must be paid to the national loss and the loss to the community inhabiting that area. The depreciation in the value of agricultural lands is a loss not merely to the individual owning those lands, but is a national loss. My Government is of the view that the public exchequer must do what it can, to restore to the people of lower Sindh the conditions are favourable as were once enjoyed by them and which they have now lost. We are of the view that both the Government of Bombay and the Government of Sindh have committed themselves to this, and my Government proposes to approach the Government of India that this problem must be faced and solved, not merely having regard to the resources of the province, but having regard to the larger interests involved, in which the responsibility of the Government of India, in the views of my Government, plainly comes in.

Government fully realised that there is need for improvement in the condition of the canals in Upper Sindh outside the Barrage Zone - especially in the Rohri Division. We are considering the question of execution of certain schemes, which, it is hoped, will be beneficial to the tract.

The third most important subject that will require our immediate attention is the report of the reorganisation Committee appointed by the late Government. The honourable members are acquainted with the interim report submitted by that Committee and the matters arising therefrom. It is the intention of my Government to study the said interim report and take immediate action upon it as far as possible.

I now turn to a few specific questions, which have engaged the attention of this Honourable House and the public during the last twelve months.

First of all, I wish to announce that following the noble example of the Congress ministers in other parts of the country, we propose to accept the standard of emoluments that they have accepted for themselves. (Loud applause). A bill, fixing those emoluments, will be placed before the next session of the Assembly.

With regard to the recovery of fines in default of payment of which a sentence of imprisonment has been undergone, the law on the subject is that in such cases no Court shall issue a warrant for the recovery of the fines, unless, for special reasons to be recorded in writing, the court considers it necessary to do so. Government proposes to instruct the District Magistrates to bring to the notice of the Courts concerned that Government does not desire that such recovery should be made. (Loud applause).

With regard to Honourary Special Magistrates, where such exist at present, we shall only continue them until arrangements can be made for the disposal of their work by stipendiary Magistrates, and as soon as proposals in that behalf are worked out, we shall approach the Assembly for the necessary funds to appoint more stipendiary Magistrates, where such appointments are found necessary.

With regard to nominations to Local Bodies, we propose to abolish them: and a bill giving effect to this proposal will be placed before the Assembly during the next Sessions. Subject to the approval of the Assembly, we propose to make the abolition effective not only as regards future nominations, but also in regard to existing nominated members on those bodies, if such a course is found to be feasible and desirable. (Loud applause)

With regard to the question of *Darbars*, and the system of *Darbaris* and Chair-holders, the late Government had decided to abolish the Collectors'-and the Commissioner's

Darbars. We adhere to that decision and propose to issue orders to that effect immediately.

One more important question that has been pressed on the attention of the Government is the demand for keeping open service roads for public traffic. My Government has given this matter its very careful consideration, and it has come to the conclusion that, wherever inspection paths exist in addition to service roads, they will be prepared to transfer the service roads to the District Local Boards for a period of five years without claiming any value for the land, provided that the Boards undertake to maintain them in proper repairs.

It has been represented to Government that the announcement made by the last Government, fixing the installments *Takavi'* to be recovered at Rs. 2 or Rs. 1 per acre of cultivated land, does not take account of the large number of persons, specially in the Thar Parkar district, who were granted *Takavi* for rebuilding their houses during floods some years ago, and who do not cultivate any land on the basis on which recoveries can be made. I can only say, at this stage, that the case of these people will also be sympathetically considered, and their installments of recovery fixed in a manner, which involves no hardship to them.

One of the matters in which the Government, Local Bodies and the public are vitally interested, is the status of the teachers in primary schools and, in particular, their emoluments. Prior to 1935 the minimum pay of primary teachers in the service of the Local Boards, including non-local authority municipalities, varied from Rs. 20 to Rs. 25 per month, while that of teachers in the service of local authority municipalities varied from Rs. 30 to Rs. 35. In 1935, the Government of Bombay fixed those rates provisionally at Rs. 15 and Rs. 20 respectively. It is generally felt that these rates do not afford a fair wage for the primary teachers, and consequently there has been much discontent amongst this class of public servants.

Allah Bux Soomro as a premier is credited with some notable feats:

1. He abolished the old system of *Darbars*.
2. He abolished the rights of commissioners and collectors about chair system.
3. He abolished the Government's system of selected members in the local bodies.
4. For the relief of peasants, he introduced reforms in the agriculture sector.
5. Maulana Ubedullah Sindhi who was then in self-exile had been offered by Allah Bux Soomro to end his exile and come to Sindh. He accepted this invitation and on his return to Sindh Allah Bux Soomro warmly welcomed him.

But the seeds of sectarianism that were sown in the soil at the time of separation movement of Sindh, did not allow him to use provincial autonomy as a good instrument for the prosperity and welfare of the people of province.

Several obstacles crept up in the smooth governance of the province.

First and foremost a clash with the interests of the Governor and his administration.

Secondly, the pressure of the Hindu community for their community interest and thirdly the party programme of the Sindh United Party.

The bureaucracy that ruled Sindh ruthlessly from 1843 felt that the democratic system and provincial autonomy had encroached upon their power and influence.

This is how G.M. Sayed viewed the problem:

> Sindh had been a happy hunting ground for the official class who had been hitherto used to treating the people as

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Struggle for New Sindh P. 13

serfs. Corruption and bribery were rampant.

So the bureaucracy created hindrances and hatched conspiracies against this nascent democratic system. It made brazen attempts to sabotage the ministry's operations and wanted to impose its hegemony.

The governor possessed more powers than the premier. He could even dismiss the premier. This position gave him authority to interfere in the business of the civil government. One such event took place in the premiership of Allah Bux Soomro. The Governor pressurised Allah Bux Soomro to enhance the land revenue. This was the test for Allah Bux Soomro, because both his party and coalition group in their meetings opposed the enhancement and unanimously passed the resolution and asked him to act according to the resolution.

To acquaint the readers with its full significance is important. Sindh had won separation from Bombay at the cost of weightage --- the Muslims of Sindh who were seventy-five percent of the population were allotted only sixty percent seats of the Assembly and Hindus who were twenty-five percent of the population got forty percent.

Second condition for the separation of Sindh was that the new province should shoulder the responsibility of the repayment of loan for the Sukkur barrage.

The first condition brought in the menace of sectarianism – the prime source of destabilisation in the Assembly of Sindh.

The second condition was payment of construction of the Sukkur barrage to the centre. Actually the condition of payment was that the Sindh province would pay the construction charges to the centre for up to fifty years but the centre demanded immediate payment and the Governor,

by the order of the centre, forced the premier for immediate payment through the income of land assessment.

Soomro was also under the pressure of Sindh United Party and the coalition group to defy the Governor on land assessment. G.M. Sayed, an idealist politician of Sindh, who had cherished ideals about the welfare of the people of Sindh province, challenged Soomro and openly told him that they had come into power to solve the problems of the people of this impoverished and suppressed land.

He further added that they had come in the Assembly to achieve certain aims and party objectives: for him aims and objectives were essential while parties and ministries were secondary things.

This version is narrated by G.M Sayed as under:

> The reader here bear with me when I explain my personal view of politics as I understand it. Politics to me are a living part of my faith aiming at the service of humanity as a whole; it is the means to achieve this high aim. Therefore so long as I find that there is a genuine and selfless effort sustained and strengthened by an earnest desire for this service my wholehearted support must unreservedly be lent it. But when politics happened to be used as a means of benefiting merely an individual or a particular vested interest at the cost of the greatest good of the greatest number and violate there by the principles of equality and justice. Not only my support and collaboration must be withdrawn but also I consider it my duty to strain every nerve to oppose and overthrow such a political regime.

G. M Sayed, who played an instrumental role in making Allah Bux premier, parted ways from Allah Bux Soomro on this issue. Soomro made efforts to get help from G.M. Sayed on the land assessment bill and for this he went to Sann village of G.M. Sayed and met with him in a bid to induce him to support the principle of the enhancement.

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But he came back a disappointed man. Of course, Sayed advised him that the best course for him would be to take the party into confidence. This exhibited a clear difference between a practical and an idealist politician, for Sayed objectives and aims were important and for a practical politician subjective conditions were preferable, as narrated by Sayed as under:

> On the other hand, K.B. Allah Bux appeared to have found that Muslim public opinion was practically non-existent and hence the Muslim M.L.A.'s support to his ministry depended upon individual favours, rather than policy and the Sethia Hindu members were wide awake and would not support any mass programme against their vested interests. Being himself conservative in nature, he was not prepared to carry out the policy publicly declared by him in the Assembly and broadcast by his colleague Pir Illahi Bux.
>
> As for the suppression of bureaucratic tyranny in Sindh, the Khan Bahadur found that official goodwill was necessary for smooth working of his government and more so for the individual favours that he found necessary for retaining the allegiance of many of the M.L.A's.
>
> Under these circumstances K.B. Allah Bux in his anxiety to retain his ministry found it practical not to stick to the party programme and carry on his government on personal rather than party lines.. When I came to understand this frame of K.B's mind, I naturally became more strict with him due to my almost religious fervour to fulfil our obligations to the masses.
>
> Several meetings of the Sindh United Party were called at which definite resolutions were passed and the Party's mandate was given to the ministry. But being a practical man, the Khan Bahadur found that it would not be practical politics if he carried out the Party's mandate, which was sure to alienate the Hindu Independent group and thereby endanger the stability and life of his Ministry.

K.B. Allah Bux had only two choices to follow the

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party lines, invite the wrath of the Governor or accept the desire of the Governor with regard to land assessment.

As a practical politician, he obliged the governor. His thinking was that the last ministry of Sir Ghulam Hussain, in principle, agreed to pass the resolution of land assessment but, due to the fall of his ministry, this was not made into law.

2 His mind was quite clear that if he had not obliged the governor, the latter would in any case enforce the land assessment because the governor was anxious to implement the order of centre, either through right or wrong means.

3 If he did not accept the advice of the Governor, tomorrow, he would face hindrances in the smooth running of the ministry through a powerful bureaucracy or by himself, so he chose the path of cooperation.

4 If he would oblige the governor, he would compensate the ministry in other matters of the masses and province.

5 Allah Bux knew very well that the Muslim members of assembly were guided by their personal interests while Hindu members of the Assembly either belonged to Congress or Hindu Independent group, hence they were cautious about their community interests. As a consequence, the assembly members were opposing the land assessment and pressurising him only for face-saving measures, actually they were not serious about the matter because this land assessment bill was not harmful for their community.

Most important was the anxiousness of the governor and viceroy in this regard.

A part of the correspondence between the governor, the viceroy and secretary of state shows how much they were serious about land assessment.

Government House, Kàrachi
28th November 1938

Dear Lord Linlithgow

The political situation in Sindh is still uncertain. My ministers have spent the four months during which I have been here in discussions and negotiations with the Congress, the Muslim League and all the undecided parties.

They assure me that they have not committed themselves to any promise to postpone the barrage settlement. Their attitude, however, can not but give colour to the idea that they would in return for Congress support try to secure such a postponement.
I have been kept fully informed by my chief minister of all that has taken place and have tried to convince him that postponement is impossible. The settlement was arrived at after the fullest examination. It is moderate and free from any serious objection. I have made it particularly clear to my ministers that postponement would impair the credit of Sindh.
I feel disappointed that these four months have left this question still in the air, but I was unable to convince My Ministers that there was no justification for further bargaining. They will now, I expect, reopen the question with Graham. It is also a matter of regret to me that nothing substantial has been done during the time. The ministry has been engaged almost continuously in rather futile conversations. I am inclined to think that they will survive the coming session, but they have no substantial achievement to show in answer to an attack. I am vacating my office on December 1st and wish to thank you and Lord Braburne for the very sympathetic attitude which you have taken at all times and for the support which you

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have always given me.

Yours sincerely
J. H. Garret

Government House Karachi
9th December 1938

Dear Lord Linlithgow
I thank you for your letter of December 4th and am sure that you will be glad to hear that in spite of the crisis I had thoroughly good leave and have returned full of zeal.
I had a thorough conversation with Garrett about the Barrage rates and he left me with the impression that Allah Bux would be prepared to accept the Congress demand for the postponement of the rates if given any encouragement from me. Since my return I have seen Allah Bux almost every day and from the beginning I have taken up the position that the new rates represent a compromise between him and me and that there can be no possibility of his withdrawing from his part of the bargain. I have told him quite frankly that I would rather lose my ministry than put up with dictation from the Congress.
Allah Bux has expressed himself as entirely in accord with me and prepared to risk being defeated on a motion of 'no-confidence' rather than toe the Congress line. I do not pretend that this was his spontaneous decision. But I made it so plain to him that he could not with any regard for his relations with me accede to the Congress demand that I now feel almost sure that he will not let me down. He has had frequent conversations with leading Congressmen, including Vallabhai Patel, and in the last few days with Subash Bose. The attitude of the majority of the Congress working committee is, Allah Bux tells I that the Barrage orders are fair and that there is no occasion for postponing either the levy of the new rates, if justified by prices, or the re-grouping.
In the working committee a stand was made for the postponement of the regrouping by Abul Kalam Azad, about he was an extremist in my day in Bengal, whom you probably know more than I do. I am told that he is a Bengali Muslim who knows nothing of the merits of the case and that the working committee wish to conciliate him because through him they wish to increase their influence among the Muslim community. On logical

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grounds, I had no difficulty in explaining to Allah Bux that it was preposterous to expect that my Government should postpone the enforcing of the orders for the revision settlement in order to satisfy the vanity of a single Mohammedan and thereby improve the position of the Congress vis-a-vis the Mohammedan Community.
My Hindu Minister, whom I distrust profoundly, was very emphatic that we should not surrender to the Congress demand, and I have received other indication that the non-Congress Hindus who support the present ministry would be strongly opposed to our surrendering to Congress.
As no date had been appointed before my return for the meeting of Legislative Assembly, and as there was no urgent business for consideration. I have agreed with my ministers that the session should start on January 4th and that the sitting should be continuous - except for a short break before the presentation of the Budget - until the end of March. Allah Bux and Nihchaldas, my Hindu minister are of opinion that their position has strengthened since my departure on leave and that even though the Congress party remain neutral on a no-confidence motion. It is possible that the ministry may not be defended.
At the present moment the objections, which have been received against the revision settlement order, have not yet disposed of. I understand that they are being classified and will come later. My Revenue Commissioner Collins, is apprehensive that my Hindu minister would try to secure some modification of the regrouping proposals, but I can not say whether there is any justification for this fear on his part or not. In any case I consider that with your approval I should be full justified in over riding any proposal for modification except to the extent to which my revenue officials concur in it.
Allah Bux told me after his last interview with Subash Bose that he had made it quite clear to Subash that I would not in any circumstances agree to postponement and that he as a Chief Minister had every intention of supporting me. This, of course, you must take what for it may be worth, I can not tell you exactly how much that may be.
In these conditions I doubt if you will want a detailed examination now from me as to the possibility of my having to override my ministers. The position rather which we have to consider is what is going to happen if my ministers stand with me and are defeated on a vote of 'no-confidence'. That is a very difficult thing to forecast, but I have gathered from Allah Bux that there is no chance of Congress making this an all-India matter;

probably you have more reliable sources of information on this particular point than I have. I discussed the matter from this point of view in my last interview with the secretary of state and also with find later Stewart and I gathered that the policy of the India office at present is that, so long as there is no risk of the matter being made one of an all-India protest against the new constitution, there can be no question of my giving way.

The position which we have now to envisage is one in which my ministers are dismissed on a vote of no-confidence as I am unable to secure a new ministry except on terms either of postponing or more probably canceling- the orders. I do not myself think that we shall ever get to as difficult a position as that, to me it appears more likely a new ministry would take office under protest, casting upon me the odium of the enhancement of the Barrage rates, but declaring it to be preferable to accept this position than to give up the powers which are granted by the new constitution. I have been told by Allah Bux; that he understands the position of Congress to be that they fully realise the liberality of the provision of the new constitution in its relation to the provinces and that they have now no wish, as once they undoubtedly had to find some excuse for refusing to cooperate in working the new constitution.

Yours sincerely
L. Graham

20 December
Calcutta

My Dear Graham

I must apologise for my delay in thanking you for you secret letter of the 9th December, No. 418, which I was very glad to get. Let me at once tell you how glad I am that you have taken so firm a stand with Allah Bux in this matter of the barrage rates. What you tell me of his attitude in the light of the pressure you have brought to bear upon him in very definitely satisfactory and I hope sincerely that it will be possible to hold him to it. As regards the proposals for last sentence of paragraph of your letter. I do not in present circumstance wish to ask for the detailed examination to which you refer in paragraph 9. I should however, be most grateful if you would keep me in touch with the action to be taken on the report of the Sindh Reorganisation committee in so far as it concerns major retrenchments in expenditure on the barrage.

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I do not overlook the difficulty of the problem you discuss in paragraph 9 and 10, but I trust sincerely that the development of the position which you anticipate in paragraph is a likely one, and I cannot believe that Congress would find themselves on very good ground in making this essentiality from that point of view by what you tell me of your conversation with Allah Bux.

Yours sincerely
Linlithgow

Allah Bux Soomro withstood a lot of pressure from the Hindu community who were clamouring for a ban on Om Mandli, because they felt that it was harmful for their family life.

The Om Mandli center, organised by Dada Lekhraj, was a religious and educational institution that also sheltered women. This Mandli attracted a large number of widowed, married and unmarried women of the *Bhaiband* community. The demand for a ban on the centre threatened the life of the Allah Bux ministry but the ministry did not accept this point of view, as there was no provision in the existing law that could warrant Government's intervention for the suppression of Om Mandli.

In the meantime the Hindu community through Jethmal Parsram courted the Muslim League for its support and the Muslim League lent its support to the Hindu community. Upon acquiring support the Hindu community compelled their ministers to withdraw from the ministry and also tabled a no-confidence motion against it.

This scenario of parliamentary politics made Muslim Leaguers very happy and they were not aware that the Hindu community had already made an underhand deal with Allah Bux Soomro.

To begin with Soomro approached the opposition and asked them to help the government. "If you are sincere with the principles, for the sake of stability and continuity

of the democratic process and for the betterment of province either join the ministry or do not support the no-confidence motion because it is a matter of the Hindu community."

As I mentioned above the opposition had already made a pledge with the Hindu community and had rejected the proposal of the ministry.

Allah Bux Soomro had only two choices either to accept the defeat of his ministry or give in to the demand of the Hindu community. Soomro accepted the terms of the Hindu community and thus saved his government. As a consequence, the time when a no-confidence motion was taken up in the Assembly, the Hindu members left their seats from the opposition benches and went over to the ministerial side, torpedoing the no-trust motion and succeeded in safe guarding their community interests.

Following are reports about Om Mandli problem.

The Times
Printing House Square, E.C.4 from issued

28 March 1939

Civil Disobedience in Sindh

Two Ministers resign.

Bombay; March 27

Two Hindu Ministers of the Sindh cabinet. Mr. Nihchldas C. Vazirani and Dialmal Doultram have resigned. The cabinet's difficulties are said to have been caused by the serious turn taken by the (Civil disobedience) movement against the Om Mandli women's institution, which has led to the arrest of more than 110 persons. A motion of censure proposed by the Congress party against the cabinet over the Om Mandli issue was defeated after two days debate. The Om Mandli is a woman's educational and cultural institution at Hyderabad, Sindh. Last September certain allegations were made regarding its

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management and the Government were urged to close it. The agitation has continued and has taken on a communal bias, so that a merely local question has became an issue of provincial importance.'

Government House, Karachi
18th August 1939

Dear Lord Linlithgow
This is in continuation of my letter of the 8th August. On the whole I am surprised with the move initiated by Nihchaldas while he was out of Sindh for a combination with Congress to form a coalition Government.

My Chief Minister, as soon as Nihchaldas came back, informed me that there was nothing in the move and recently Nihchaldas has himself said that he expected nothing from it and that he really only made it to embarrass the Congress members of the Sindh Assembly. Certainly the whole thing seems to have collapsed without any body taking the trouble to prick the bubble and I do not think that we shall hear any thing more about sincerely.

Yours sincerely
L. Graham.

In order to provide enlightenment to the reader, let us see G.M. Sayed's version.

Another noteworthy event that occurred about the time of the Budget Session of 1939 was the 'Om Mandli' affair, which drew the attention of the whole province and even threatened the life of the Allah Bux Ministry. The Om Mandli was a novel type of institution sponsored and conducted by Dada Lekhraj, a retired rich Sindh-*work* merchant of Hyderabad. The Mandli professed to serve as a religious and educational centre and a benevolent asylum for ill-treated women both young and old. It seemed to attract such large numbers of widowed, married and unmarried women of the *Bhaiband*

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community of Hyderabad that an organised opposition sprang up, which soon made itself felt upon the Government in order to have the Mandli banned and closed down. So far as we in the Muslim League party were concerned, we felt that in this age of liberty and freedom for every individual, the Hindu demand for suppression of the Mandli, involving as it did the denial of the right of free movement and association to the women of *Bhaiband* community, could hardly be considered as legitimate and therefore at first we felt reluctant to pledge our support, but Mr. Jethmal Parsram, known for his broad views approached us and pleaded that as the League stood for the protection of Minority rights, our party ought to support the Hindu demand, which only aimed at securing the family life and domestic stability of an important section of their community. It was of course undeniable that an overwhelming majority of the Hindus were behind this demand. We could see that as the Mandli was a purely Hindu institution and had outraged the sentiments of the entire the Hindu community. it would be unfair on our part, if as representatives of the majority community in Sindh, we failed to respect the wishes of the minority community and support their demand for redress of their grievance. We wanted to establish thereby a healthy convention that when one community, more especially a minority community, made a unanimous demand in a matter concerning exclusively its own affair, the other community should lend its support to such a demand, irrespective of what its own views might be about the propriety of such a demand.

But so far as the Ministry was concerned, it appeared that it was not prepared to accept this view as there was no provision in the existing law that could warrant Government intervention for the suppression of the Om Mandli. In view of this attitude of the Ministry, the Hindus who had already made sure of our support, compelled their Ministers to withdraw from the Ministry; it also tabled a no-confidence motion against the Ministry. While this motion was pending, the ministerial side approached us with a proposal, that either we should not support the no-confidence motion or we should accept office and join the Ministry. In making these proposals, it was represented to us that the Hindu leaders were in reality making only a pretence of opposition to the Ministry with the sole objet of extracting from the Ministry some extra demands for their own benefit at the

cost of Muslim interests, and therefore, if our party refused to accept the Ministerial proposal, the latter would be compelled to submit to the Hindu dictation and hold us responsible for submitting to exorbitant Hindu terms and thereby betraying the Muslim interests.

Whereas our party would not believe the truth of the above position, we considered this a subtle device on the part of the Ministry to save itself, by driving a wedge between the Hindu members and us. We somehow could not find ourselves ready to believe that all that the Hindus had been so insistently and vociferously agitating about was a mere show. Throughout this period of uncertainty, the Hindus behaved in a manner, which not only showed their earnestness about the no-confidence motion, but also their keen anxiety that we should not leave them in the lurch at the last moment.

We could not therefore allow ourselves to flirt with the ministerial side and indeed treated their overtures with cold indifference.

Having despaired of us, the ministry knew that their fate depended upon the mercy of the Hindus and accordingly they started secret negotiations with the Hindu party and unsuspected by us, the Hindu party carried on these negotiations with the ministerial side on one hand and on the other hand, they kept on pretending to us that they were very earnest about the success of the no-confidence motion and demanded renewed assurances from us for our support to it. In this way, the Hindus were able to take the fullest advantage of the precarious position in which Ministry found itself and its desperate desire to save itself at all cost. The Hindus were successful in extracting certain extra terms, comprised of 18 points, to which they compelled the four Muslim ministers to agree in writing.

As a result, at the time of the no-confidence motion being taken up in the Assembly, the Hindus left their seats on the opposition benches and went over to the ministerial side, thereby torpedoing the no-confidence motion.

It was only then that we realised what had so far seemed to us incredible. We could now see that what the ministerial side had told us was indeed the truth and the Hindu members in their usually cunning way had in clear contravention of their declared words, exploited the division in Muslim ranks and used our party merely as a

pawn in their crafty game. Their solemn assurances to us and their professed opposition to the Ministry had thus all along been fake!

It must be noted here that the members of the Congress party in the Assembly had also been a party to this double-crossing deal. They had like the Muslim League Party declared themselves prepared on principle to support the no-confidence motion and later like the Hindu members decided secretly to go back on their declared word. They had taken an active part in the secret negotiations of the Hindu Party with the Ministry. One or two of them are said to have been even present at the time when the Ministry was signing the agreement containing the 18 demands of the Hindu members.

Soon after the Om Mondli affair, which receded into the background as soon as the Hindu members had succeeded in making fresh capital out of the Muslim differences, came the Hanuman Mandir episode.

It appeared that an unauthorised encroachment had been made on a certain piece of Government land on the Artillery Maidan in Karachi and a temple known as Hanuman Mandir had been set up there. Notices were served and other legal steps were taken to have the place vacated but the temple-keeper continued to remain, with the result that ultimately the Government was compelled to take direct action and had the encroachment forcibly removed.

But although this occupation had been neither lawful nor long-existent enough to deserve any special notice, its forceful removal by the Government created a flutter amongst the Hindus who took out a big procession, and threatened to take further steps unless the Government agreed to retrace its steps.

Our attitude in this matter naturally and rightly was one of indifference. We knew that the Hindu demand was not legitimate. But still, we did not wish to injure their religious susceptibilities, as, after all, it did involve a religious place of worship, howsoever questionable was its origin or claim. We did not wish to give the minority community a cause to complain that we came in the way of their claim for restoration of what they rightly or wrongly asserted was a temple. The matter soon ended

happily, when the government yielded to the Hindu pressure and conceded their demand to an extent that satisfied the parties concerned.

The second event took place when G.M. Sayed moved a vote of no-confidence motion, as he narrates below.

> When the session eventually was called at the Budget time (1939) and I moved a vote of no-confidence motion in the Assembly only seven members rose to support the motion. Even Sir Ghulam Hussain, the leader of the opposition, had been by that time tackled and won over by the gift of ministership.

Following are four reports on the political scenario by I.H. Taunton to Puckle and by Linlithgow to Graham.

Government House Karachi
4th January 1939

> I have this afternoon had a message to say that in the Sindh Legislative Assembly, the new session of which began today, a member of the Muslim opposition has handed in a notice for moving a motion of no-confidence' against my ministry as a whole. The grounds started in the motion are disapproved of the General policy of the Ministry, though we may assume. I think that the introduction of the revised rates for the Barrage areas, will be the main point of attack, broadening the base of the attack is, I presume few outside votes.
> My Chief Minister was expecting this Motion and up to a few days ago he was confident that he would survive provided that the Congress members remained neutral. Since then, however, there has been some display of dissatisfaction among the non-Congress Hindus, and now he is not so confident.
> Meanwhile negotiations are going on to bring my chief minister and the late chief minister into agreement, one of the terms of which would be that the late chief minister,

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Sir Ghulam Hussain, should be admitted to the ministry while my present chief minister should retain his position. I do not know that this is likely to come to any thing and I feel that such an agreement, if reached, would not be likely to be of a lasting nature.

My chief minister told me that he would ask the speaker to fix a date a week from now for the discussion of the no-confidence motion. But I now hear that Monday January 9th has been fixed. I will give you any further information of what happens during the next few days as soon as I have anything reliable to report. My chief minister has reiterated to me that he has not the least intention of giving way on the question of the barrage rates.

L. Graham

Government House Karachi
9th January 1939

This is indirect continuation of my letter No. 2 dated January 4th. In the last paragraph of that letter I told you that the date fixed for the no-confidence motion was January 9th, that has now been altered and the debate is to be taken tomorrow, January 10th.

Meanwhile the negotiations for a central combination, leaving out the Muslim League on the right and the Congress on the left, have been continued and appear to have reached a stage at which an agreement can be concluded. I have at the suggestion of my chief minister and from him I understand that he is so dissatisfied with the attitude of the Muslim League that he is ready to join my ministry, bringing with him those of his followers who are not fanatically devoted to the Muslim League. The consideration of this access of strength to my ministry is to be an increase in the number of Ministers either to five or six.

I think that I have mentioned in previous letters my opinion that an increase in the number of Ministers would be desirable in order to broaden the base of the Ministry as a whole and to give my ministers personally a sense of security which would allow them leisure to formulate and execute a progressive policy instead of leaving them in

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their present position of tight rope walkers solely concerned with the problem of remaining in office. I can not, of course be sure that the resumptions of friendly relations between Allah Bux and Ghulam Hussain will be permanent, but having now had two successive Ministries neither of which was in a position to do any thing effective because of its feeling of insecurity, I think I am justified in making some kind of experiment.

Both Allah Bux and Ghulam Hussain assure me that I shall have further trouble over the assessment, the motion of no-confidence is not in the name of Sir Ghulam Hussain but in that of one of the Advanced Muslim Leaguer and Sir Ghulam tells me that it is his intention to resign with four or five members from the opposition party in the course of today or before the motion comes up tomorrow. If that is done, I do not think it will prevent the moving of the motion, but it will ensure its defeat. The present intention of Ghulam and Allah Bux is that the new coalition and the increase in the number of the ministers should not be announced until some date in February, when there is to be a short adjournment of the Assembly before taking up consideration of the Budget. The enlarged ministry will then face the Assembly on the Budget.

The minor question whether the enlarged ministry should consist of five or six ministers is likely to give some trouble, because, if I have Ministry of four Muslim and two Hindus, as Ghulam Hussain prefers, I maintain the present proportion between the communities, while if I have a ministry of five, three Muslims and two Hindus, the Hindus will have obtained an advance in status. In some ways I should like to get in one minister from another community, but I cannot say definitely what will happen in this matter. Ghulam Hussain has said that he will very reluctantly agree to a ministry of five if I can not see my way to one of six, on the other hand, my Hindu Minister says that he is not sure whether he can carry the Hindus with him in support of a Ministry of a six. In looking for a compromise, the difficulty is that none of the Europeans would care to be considered for a ministership as all of them are otherwise engaged and I have only one other member a Parsi, who is not either a Muslim or a Hindu.

Yours sincerely
L. Graham

Government House, Karachi
13th January 1939

Dear Lord Linlithgow

In continuation of my letter No. 10 of January 9th I have not much to add which you will not already have seen in the newspapers regarding the no-confidence motion. In a house of sixty members only thirty-nine took part in the division. The Congress party earned considerable ridicules by remaining neutral, as they were in fact bound to do since the Chief Minister informed them that he was not prepared to postpone giving effect to the revised rates in the Barrage areas.

Although the attack on the Ministry may be said to have fizzled out, the debate was not without its value because it produced constructive speeches from the late Chief Minister, Sir Ghulam Hussain and Mr. Jamshed Mehta the once famous Mayor of Karachi. Both these speakers urged the necessity for a re-grouping of the parties in the Assembly in order to achieve a ministry with a reasonable amount of stability. There is actually no chance of attaining that stability without increasing the number of Ministers. Even so, when this is done and whether the ministry is constituted at five or six and at present my Chief Minister favours having the larger number. The Sindh parliament will always be loth, so long as it is mainly composed of Zamindars to increase the burden of taxation on their class.

Yours sincerely
L. Graham

Karapur,
16th January 1939

My dear Graham

Many thanks for your letters of the 4th and 9th January, No 2 and 10, about your ministerial situation. I did not answer for there seemed to me to be nothing to be done at the moment save to await development. I congratulate you most heartily on the developments which have, as I gather from the press, since taken place, for I gather that your Assembly has thrown out, by 32 to 7, Mr. Sayed's motion of want of confidence in the premier.

I am not quite clear from the press report read with your letters as to what Ghulam Hussain's position in all this matter is. He abstained, I gather, from the voting and it is to the good, of course, that he did not go into opposition

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against your Chief Minister and presumably he thought the safer cause from his own point of view was to abstain from voting. At the same time, given the critical character of this division, one cannot but feel that abstention from support (even if identical with abstention from opposition) is not a very good preliminary to joining the ministry whose fate was in issue.
I look forward with great interest to the developments as regards the increase in the strength of your ministry and I trust sincerely that Allah Bux and Ghulam Hussain are right in thinking that we shall have no further trouble on the vital question of re-assessment, on which both regard it as so important to stand firm.

Yours sincerely
Linlithgow

21th January 1939

Dear Puckle

The Legislative Assembly has been in session during the fortnight under report and its proceeding evoked considerable public interest. The agitation against the present ministry came to a head, when Mr. G.M. Sayed M.L.A. moved a no-confidence motion against the ministry. The discussion on the 10th instant continued till the night of 12th idem and resulted in an overwhelming victory for the government. Seven members voted in far and thirty-two against the motion. The result of the voting for the neutrality of the Congress party and support of some members who were at one time bitter opponents of the present ministry, notably Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, the ex-premier. The session has been devoted mainly to government business, eight bills were passed without difficulty and two were referred to a select committee.

Yours sincerely
I.H. Taunton

These two events show that the Hindu Assembly members were only interested in their community matters and Muslim members indulged their personal interests only, as one important precedent shows that Sir Ghulam Hussain, an old parliamentarian of the Bombay Legislative

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Council, opposition leader of Assembly and first premier of Sindh, switched loyalties and betrayed his colleagues merely for a ministership and expressed allegiance to Allah Bux Soomro. In these conditions Allah Bux Soomro as a man of vision and foresight chose a conciliatory path for the purpose of running the province smoothly, and adopted a balanced policy with the governor and the bureaucracy.

Before the no-confidence motion against Allah Bux Soomro in October 1938 a move was made to unite all the Assembly members.

Allah Bux Soomro agreed with Jinnah, Sir Sikander Hayat, the then premier of Punjab, Moulvi Fazal Haq, the premier of Bengal, G.M. Sayed, Sir Ghulam Hussain and other Muslim M.L.A's that unity of Sindh was the necessity of the time. But the prominent leadership of Sindh Muslim League and Jinnah asked him to resign as premier. Soomro felt that this demand from Jinnah and leadership of Muslim League was unjust with him. He rebuffed the demand and countered with the argument that premiers of Punjab and Bengal Sir Sikander Hayat and Moulvi Fazal Haq had joined the Muslim League but had never been asked for the fresh vote of confidence or allegiance of the members; why was he then asked to do so. He felt there was unnecessary interference of the central Muslim League in provincial matters. As many years later G. M. Sayed stood against this interference of Jinnah and central Muslim League in 1945 and Ayub Khuhro after partition as a first chief minister of Sindh, as narrated by Dr. Hamida Khuhro in her book Mohammad Ayub Khuhro.

It is evident in his entire political career Allah Bux Soomro did not join any all-India grouping, apart from his own founded party.

He followed the path of Harchandrai Vishindas. Althouth he had sympathy for the Congress, inside and outside the Assembly and, in 1913, had organised the all-

India session at Karachi and was a chairman of the reception committee. Yet before his death in 1928 as a member of the Indian Legislative Assembly when he was required to go to Delhi in spite of the advice of doctors, Harchandrai still went to cast his vote in fa our of the no-confidence motion against the Simon Commission. He collapsed there in the ambulance on his way to the Assembly hall. Harchandrai was, however, never a member of the Congress.

In order to clarify their positions, both Jinnah and Allah Bux Soomro issued statements, as Jones Allen Keith narrated in his paper Muslim politics and the growth of the Muslim League in Sindh. - 1935 - 1941

> In a October 14 press statement, Jinnah accused Allah Bux of betraying the agreement and charged that he had done so, firstly, because the premier had been informed that Congress was willing to reconsider the possibility of supporting his ministry and secondly, because Allah Bux has insisted on continuing as Premier if a League cabinet was formed..
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> In replying to Jinnah's charges, Allah Bux denied that either the forthcoming Congress support or his continuation as premier had influenced his action. He based his explanation for ending the October 9 agreement on his party's two-fold policy of giving support to All-India Muslim League on the matters of All-India importance. But minting freedom from League control in provincial affairs, which, Allah Bux asserted, precluded membership in a Muslim League Assembly party.

The Muslim League suffered a setback in toppling the ministry of Allah Bux Soomro either in the name of unity of Muslim members of Assembly or through a vote of no-confidence. After the defeat of the vote of no-confidence, Soomro started his welfare programme and was successful in many respects. In the meantime the Muslim Leaguers were waiting to avenge the defeat at a suitable moment.

As narrated by Dr. Hamida Khuhro in her book, Mohammad Ayub Khuhro, Khuhro and other leaders called a meeting where they demanded the organisation of the Muslim League in Sindh. The next day on 29th March the ministrial side organised a meeting at Khaliqdina hall. The Muslims were very much annoyed at the fall of Ghulam Hussain ministry and blasted the leadership for the debacle. They refused to listen to clarifications by Pir Ilahi Bux and Pir Ali Muhammad Rashdi. G. M. Sayed accepted responsibility for the action.

Within months they found the right opportunity in the case of Masjid Manzilgah.

Masjid Manzilgah

Allah Bux Soomro believed that the inhabitants of the province must enjoy their rights without any discrimination of caste and creed and he took practical steps in this regard but the people who like to use religion as a instrument for their political gains, turned Masjid Manzilgah into a contentious issue.

This matter was already two decades old. In 1939 when Muslims felt that the premier was successful in solving the matters of Hanoman Mandir and Om Mandli of the Hindu community they were expecting from him resolution of the Masjid Manzilgah issue.

Allah Bux Soomro had also made up his mind to resolve the matter. For this purpose he met with the Muslim delegation and told them that he wanted to resolve the dispute but due to the other parties involved, he could not do so immediately because of the Hindu claim that their sacred place *Sadhbela* was near the mosque. Since their ladies regularly went for religious rites; so the chance of an untoward incident involving the Muslim community was very likely and this would aid confrontation between the two communities.

Allah Bux Soomro felt that both the parties had their own arguments and priorities and that it needed further efforts and time to make them agree on any acceptable decision.

But the Muslim leadership pressurised Soomro to take immediate action for the restoration of the mosque.

The leadership of Sindh Muslim League felt that the Muslim masses were very much emotional and Hindus would not agree to the restoration of the Mosque. A wave of resentment built up against Soomro; the League wanted to be the beneficiary of the situation and therefore planned

to strike the iron while it was hot, but at a heavy price; they sabotaged the century-old unity of Sindh and smashed the values of tolerance and non-violence.

Firstly the Sukkur chapter of the Muslim League passed the resolution for restoration of the mosque and requested Sindh Muslim League for its pursuance. The Sindh Muslim League in its working committee meeting decided to have its way in the matter without considering the merits and demerits. Only G. M. Sayed opposed this.

> The Manzilgah question was essentially a religious question and, therefore this matter should be left to the Jamiat-ul-Ulema as, in my opinion, the Muslim League should restrict its activities to political matters.
>
> The then Ministry being definitely opposed to the Muslim League, if the latter were to take up the Manzilgah question, the Ministry would be more likely to adopt an obstinate attitude against the Muslim claim in order to spite the League: and hence, the chances, slender as they already seemed for the restoration of the mosque, were bound to be adversely affected.
>
> As the Hindus were deeply hostile to the Muslim League, their opposition to the Muslim demand for the Manzilgah was bound to increase in vehemence and vigour so as to defeat the efforts of the League, with the result that communal relations might be further embittered and at the same time, the object in view might become even more difficult to achieve.
>
> It appeared likely that the concerted efforts of the Ministry, the Hindus and the Congress in their common opposition to the Muslim League, might result in the rejection of the Muslim demand, which would react on the prestige of the Muslim League and indirectly tell upon its popularity in the Muslim masses of the province.
>
> It was also likely that in consequence of the refusal of the Ministry to accede to the Muslim demand, the League might be compelled to force matters to a head by deciding upon direct action, which was bound to affect the position

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of the All-India Muslim League, and therefore, if the Provincial League insisted upon taking up the Manzilgah question, it must take the League high Command into confidence and place all facts before it.

But the feeling amongst the members of the working committee of the Sindh Provincial Muslim League on this subject was so high that all my objections were overruled, and it was decided by an overwhelming majority that the League should take up the Manzilgah question and move the Government for the early restoration of the mosque.

This decision of the Working Committee was in a great measure due to the fact that most of the Muslims in upper Sindh were so determined in this matter that had the League refused to take up this question, it would have been taken as a disavowal on the part of the League of its representative character and as a proof that it shirked its duties to the Muslims. It would also have given a weapon to the Moulavies of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema, who already were against the League, to discredit the organisation, especially when some of these Moulavies could claim that they had already taken up this matter with the Government.

A deputation was then formed and authorised by the working committee of the League to start negotiations with the Government. It waited upon K.B. Allah Bux several times, but the Ministry kept the matter pending and went on renewing its promises to declare its decision in a short time.

Finding that the Government did not mean business and only renewed a promise as soon as its due date expired, possibly with the sole aim of playing the Hindus against the Muslims and thereby safeguarding their Ministry, the League was compelled to take a further step in this matter by forming the Restoration Committee to which the whole matter was entrusted.

G. M. Sayed's arguments had not convinced the members of the working committee and they decided to go their own way on the crucial question of Masjid Manzilgah and G. M. Sayed was not taken in the committee, as narrated by him.

On account of the personal views that I held in the matter as described above. I was of course not appointed on the restoration committee.

It must come as a surprise to the reader that the person who, to begin with, opposed the issue, later on changed his mind. Sayed felt that if the Muslim League wanted to become popular among the masses for the sake of reputation of the organisation he should stand firm.

The Muslim League started its movement on 1st October 1939 with this argument that they had provided the premier sufficient time but he had failed.

Some pertinent questions are raised for readers and historians alike.

1. Would Soomro be able to solve the sectarian problem immediately?
2. Did Soomro fail to understand the matter?
3. Why in spite of the power given to commissioner, the bureaucracy and the first premier of Sindh was not able to resolve the problem in one decade?
4. If the sectarian problem was solvable, why were stalwarts like Gandhi, Nehru and Jinnah not successful in resolving this problem throughout India?
5. Was such a sectarian problem only restricted to the Sindh province and were the other provinces of the Asian subcontinent free from communalism?
6. Were the premiers of other provinces successful in this regard?
7. Was the atmosphere normal for Allah Bux Soomro to tide over sectarianism?
8. If such was not the case, then why make allegations against him that he was the only one to have failed?
9. The leaders started a restoration movement for Masjid Manzilgah. If they were able to understand the previous history of communal riots between Catholics and Protestants, as well as between the

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Jews and the Christians, they should not have been in a hurry.

Allah Bux Soomro tried his best to restore the easy camaraderie between the Muslims and Hindus of Sindh by meeting with League leaders like Abdullah Haroon, but the latter's behaviour was rather lukewarm.

Allah Bux Soomro made the following statement on 5th February 1940 on the floor of the Sindh Legislative Assembly. He clarified his position regarding these issues.

The Honourable Khan Bahadur Allah Bakhsh:

With your permission, Sir, I would like to intervene at this stage with a view to clear the ground and to facilitate a full and frank discussion of the motion before the House.

The other day I objected to the admission of the motion not because I was anxious to escape the criticism on the way in which the Manzilgah situation had been handled but because I thought that the atmosphere was not yet suitable for a debate on a subject of this importance. The situation is yet far from normal and I fear that the debate might engender heat, which may add yet another complication in an already difficult situation. Now that the motion has been admitted I hope the honourable members will discuss it calmly and without importing any matter which may be calculated to embitter the controversy. I would therefore appeal to all sections of the House to view this matter not for the purpose of finding fault with this or that section of the House but in order to arrive at a solution of the problem, which will put an end to all the misery, and the tragic events of the past three months.

I admit that there exists a feeling of insecurity amongst Hindus in the Sukkur district and that it is the duty of Government to restore the sense of security amongst all classes of people of this Province and for that purpose to establish confidence in the rule of law and order with the least possible delay. The deplorable events of the past two months have slowed our progress and unless matters are mended the Province is likely to be thrown back by at least a generation. It pains me to say, but nevertheless it is

a fact, that these disgraceful events in the Sukkur district and the surrounding areas will remain a dark spot in the history of our Province.

The advent of provincial autonomy was bound to create various sections in the province with a hunger for political power at whatever cost. One section in order to gain its goal is chiefly responsible for the conflagration in the Sukkur district. In the early stages of such evolution political power is liable to be seized by resort to undesirable methods and even by creating a state of lawlessness. That was exactly what happened. The way to meet such a situation, in my opinion, is for the saner elements to consolidate themselves with intent to destroy this spirit of aggression for the sake of political power. This alone will enable the province to progress on sound lines and no price would be too heavy to attain this goal.

I wish to strike a note of warning here and say that it would be disastrous for the province if the idea is allowed to gain strength that ends political or otherwise can be gained to whatever extent by resorting to aggression. I frankly admit that I never expected that my Muslim brothers would so forget themselves and the rights of their non-Muslim neighbours in the village, whatever are the reasons, which they may assign, as to indulge in such an orgy of loot, arson and massacre and to resort shamelessly to the kidnapping of womenfolk and molestation of the latter's honour.

It is necessary to trace the history of the events, which have resulted in the present situation. Shortly after I came to office I attempted to secure a solution of the Manzilgah question. It seemed to me then, and I am still having the same opinion, that no solution is as good as that which is concurred in by the parties whose interests may be affected by the matter in controversy. Government has been blamed for what is said to be the inordinate delay in reaching a decision on this question. In this connection I would remind this House that the matter is not capable of easy solution. On the one hand, there are people who honestly believe that one of the Manzilgah buildings was a mosque and therefore it should be restored to the Muslims out of respect for their religious feelings by the people's own Government. On the other hand also there is a section who, too, honestly hold that none of the Manzilgah buildings was ever a mosque. Yet another section believe that even if it was a mosque its restoration

to Muslims was likely to be a source of constant friction between the two major communities, on account of the Manzilgah buildings being in the proximity of the Sadhbela and worship carried on there. And yet another section, with or without religious conviction, wished to exploit the situation for political ends. On the other hand, there was equally a group of non-Muslims who for the very political reasons resisted the restoration of the Manzilgah buildings to the Muslims. Government has experienced no difficulty in granting lands or sites for mosques or mandirs but the situation becomes complicated where the claim or opposition is based on grounds other than religious. I do not wish at this stage to blame one side or the other, for at this moment I am concerned with nothing more than to make this Honourable House realise the problem in its proper perspective. Government hoped to arrive at a solution which would afford basis for a permanent settlement of the problem, given the goodwill and harmony on the part of both the communities. Government was fully conscious of the extreme desirability of an early solution of the matter. Unfortunately, however, when the matter seemed to near decision, the Restoration Committee threatened Government with *Satyagrah* unless Government decided the matter before a specified period. Government could not surrender to such a threat and decided to watch further developments before coming to a decision. The question may be asked as to why Government did not take immediate action to end the agitation. My answer is that ostensibly the agitators had not exceeded the bounds of lawful action, whatever may have been the underground propaganda. Government hoped that better sense would eventually prevail and that the Restoration Committee would yield to a satisfactory understanding between them and Government.

The honourable members of the House must be familiar with the events following the forcible occupation of the Manzilgah by the so-called *satyagrahis*. The Restoration Committee had collected a large number of what have been called volunteers, little realising what the consequences would be when passions were already at a height and the religious frenzy had been excited to the maximum. Government feared that immediate suppression of the movement would involve the use of considerable force, which may in the long run lead to disturbances on a serious scale. They, therefore, withdrew the police force from the Manzilgah buildings and

released the prisoners in the hope that when passions subsided the Committee will realise the danger of creating a situation, which was fraught with the greatest danger to the public peace and safety. Thereafter the matter was being negotiated between Government and the Restoration Committee. It is true Government could then have recovered possession of the buildings and retained them by the use of force. But on the one hand there was a grave risk that if force were used there would be serious repercussions. On the other hand, there was a chance that the negotiation between Government and the Restoration Committee might lead to a desirable settlement. The chances of a settlement may or may not have been great, but Government decided to make one more effort with a view to avoid consequences that might arise by the use of force. Government put themselves in communication with the Chairman of the Restoration Committee, who represented to them that he and some other members were doing their best to induce the Committee to agree to a settlement, but that a majority of the Committee were not agreeable to the same. The Chairman with a view to secure the consent of the non-assenting members of the Restoration Committee obtained extensions of time. When the efforts of the Chairman and those of his supporters failed, they did not wash their hands off from the agitation that was being carried on by the Restoration Committee with the result that a feeling of disobedience to the orders of Government was being carried on by the Restoration Committee with the result that a feeling of disobedience to the orders of government was aroused among several of the people. The agitation that was carried on by Hindus about the same time, from the press and the platform at Sukkur under the presidentship of Dr. Moonje added its weight in the same direction. The Hindu leaders should have foreseen it and should have cooperated with Government, in meeting the difficult situation. The leaders of the Restoration Committee, at least the saner element, should have realised their responsibilities, which had become all the greater under the circumstances and should have advised in the direction of obedience to the orders of Government. If such advice of theirs had not been listened, they should have disassociated themselves from the movement, which they did not do. The result was that Government was compelled to use force and assert their authority and take possession. The events that followed are much to be deplored and I take this opportunity of extending my sincerest and profoundest sympathy to those who have

been the victims of this lawlessness and mass violence and to their dependents.

The question now is what is the solution? As I have already stated, the sense of insecurity is still there and the recent murders, whatever may be their causes, will add to the uneasiness, which at present rightly prevail among Hindus. It may be, that whatever happened during the period of the riots may be due to the excitement that then prevailed. The continuance of stray murders since then, however, is bound to create a sense of insecurity amongst the Hindus, and Government does not wish to conceal from the House that this has given them and is giving them anxious times and deep thought. They are thinking of devising means may be possible to overcome this state of affairs. If a change of Ministry is any solution the remedy is at hand and could be put into effect within the next 24 hours. On the other hand, if the House feels that the trouble is far deeper than can be removed by this method, the members of this House should sink their differences, put their heads together and find out how exactly we should proceed. In the opinion of the Government, it is necessary to create two factors to bring a desirable state of affairs.

(I) Respect for law and order, and

(2) Goodwill and harmony between the communities inhabiting the province. In the opinion of the Government respect for law and order cannot be restored unless those that were responsible for the disturbances of the public peace are made to realise that their conduct was positively harmful to the society and that for that purpose to inflict upon them the necessary punishment, which may serve a lesson to others. For the securing of the other object, Government is prepared and is carrying on propaganda with a view to inculcates among the people in the villages a sense of responsibility towards each other. The members of the majority community so as to create a sense of security for the non-Muslims living amidst them Government is prepared to make available the necessary funds and opportunities to attain this end.

Government's desire to secure the cooperation of the honourable members of this House in attaining this end and with this view they invite the honourable members to consider the position of the various groups occupying the opposition benches. The first amongst them is the Muslim League group who, in the opinion of Government, were

connected with the Manzilgah agitation which resulted in the creation of that state of affairs which Government so much deplore and for the remedying of which all means are being sought. If this group would cooperate with Government not only in condemning those responsible for this state of affairs but would also cooperate with Government in their policy to bring all the offenders to book and in carrying on propaganda in impressing upon the people that the agitation was not in the right direction in as much as what has happened or is happening is against the tenets of Islam, Government would only be too pleased to welcome their cooperation. It is in the opinion of Government for the members of the Muslim League group themselves to express their views on the matter.

The second group is the Hindu Independent party. It is to be regretted that they should have thought fit to have withdrawn their representatives from the Cabinet at this juncture when their help was needed the most. I must be excused for saying that in my opinion this step on their part was not a wise one. I hope better sense will prevail and they will extend their fullest cooperation.

The last of the group is the Congress group. Unfortunately, having regard to the political conditions in India, generally, it is not possible for this group to share with the Government the responsibility of office. Government, however, hopes that the talks now in progress between Mahatma Gandhi and His Excellency the Viceroy will solve the constitutional tangle and make it possible for the Congress ministers to resume office in the various provinces. Government may then be in a position to ask the Congress group in the Assembly to share with the Government the responsibility of Government in this province. Until then and so long as my Government continues in office it is hoped that the usual support on the basis of the merits of each matter will continue to be advanced by them and all other parties.

One last word and I am done. I wish to ask the honourable members to speak out their minds in no hesitating terms. I do not wish to conceal my own thoughts at all. I desire to know the attitude of this Honourable House on the subject. If it be the intention of the Honourable House to talk out the motion, Government will note their views and would much prefer the appointment of a committee to

suggest ways and means to meet the situation. If, on the other hand, it is the wish of the honourable members to vote on the motion, I would pray that the discussion be closed in time for division before the clock strikes seven. If as a result of the division the motion is carried, I have made up my mind not to continue in office. I wish in that case to tender resignation of my office tomorrow morning. I have said this in no spirit of challenge or revolt. But I honestly feel that in spite of my best and honest efforts to do my duty by my province I have not the confidence of my colleagues in this Honourable House. It is no use sticking to an office which is no bed of roses. The province is in the grip of a grave menace and the situation needs to be treated as a matter of grave public emergence. The situation can be met only if Government is put in a strong position to deal with the existing situation in a firm and statesman-like manner.

It is one of the tenets of Islam that the strong should protect the weak. We Muslims in Sindh are not only the majority community but also are strong enough to protect all and it is our duty to protect the minorities and the weak. I therefore, appeal to all Muslims, both inside and outside the House, to live up to the teachings of the religion, which we have the privilege to follow and to make this province a place where all communities can live together in peace and prosperity.

As a result of that movement a thousand people were sent to prison and hundreds of people were killed but the main harm caused by the riots was the sowing of seeds of hatred between the two communities.

G.M. Sayed after his release from Hyderabad prison has referred to the incident in his already cited work.

The events that have occurred at Sukkur and its outskirts after our arrest on the 19th November 1939 are indeed most heart-rending. While I was in jail, I was acquainted with these events by my Muslim and Hindu friends _ amongst whom there were also some of my Congress friends of old _ who were good enough to visit me in jail and after my release I have been able to know more about them. I am sorry I was not able while I was in jail to express my sympathy with all those who have suffered in

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the riots. Now that I am out of jail, I hasten to extend my whole-hearted sympathy to all those Hindus and Muslims who have suffered in these tragic events. My heart goes out in sympathy specially for those Hindu sufferers who were innocent and blameless.

When I associated myself with the agitation for the restoration of the Manzilgah Mosque, I little dreamt that events would take such a tragic course and relations between communities would be so embittered. I need hardly emphasise that all acts of murder, dacoity and arson are opposed to our accepted principles and they must be condemned without reservation.

The province of Sindh is still an infant in the political world. It has had to pass through many experiences all of which ought to serve as lessons to us. The chief cause of our past troubles is our inexperience and lack of planning. But we must remember that from ancient times, the Hindus and Muslims in Sindh have always lived in peace due to the influence of Hindu and Muslim saints, and, it has, therefore, been my cherished hope that Sindh may serve as the pioneer in the establishment of Hindu-Muslim concord all over India, and my sorrow is all the greater, because the recent events have interrupted Sindh's mission in this direction. The anguish and pain that this situation has caused to my mind can be known from the Hindu friends who have had an opportunity to know me well.

The need of the hour in Sindh is harmony and peace between the two communities and I consider it my duty to work for the achievement of that end. It is no doubt true that our province is at the present moment passing through a critical stage and at such a time as this, I would fervently appeal to every inhabitant of the Province that we should all work out such a path for ourselves whereby it may be possible to re-establish the old harmony and goodwill between Hindus and Muslims in Sindh, so that they may once again continue to live as good neighbours as in the past.

Of course, even this statement did not spare me the invectives of certain papers whose irresponsible journalism had done so much in aggravating the crisis. I felt pained by their imputation of ulterior motives to me but I continued my sincere efforts for a just solution to the communal tension that existed in the province.

Regarding the toppling of the ministry of Allah Bux Soomro, Jones Allen Keith, mentioned in his paper, Muslim Politics and the growth of the Muslim League in Sindh 1935 – 1941, as follows:

Summary

The failure of post-conference negotiations to bring Allah Bux into the League camp and form a new League ministry served to raise doubts in the minds of the Sindh Leaguers as to the efficacy of all-India efforts to order provincial affairs. So in searching for a way to defeat Allah Baksh's ministry, the Sindh Leaguers decided to exploit the communally-explosive Manzilgah mosque issue, which they hoped, would expose the premier's strong reliance on Hindu backing and marshal broad Muslim support to pressure and topple the Allah Bux ministry. The choice of Manzilgah, a strictly provincial issue, marked a return to a strong preoccupation with Sindhi concerns in terms of province-centre relations; a trend which was further reflected in Sindh Leaguers pursuit of *Satyagraha* without the approval of the central League.

In their campaign to restore the Manzilgah mosque, the Sindhi Leaguers were aware of the issue's potential to engender communal tension and strife but they were divided by what tactics they should use and how far they should go in their prosecution of the issue. Thus the emergence of a moderate and extreme faction within the League leadership provided a further example of their increasing political sophistication. But their failure to exercise restraint and evolve a united course of action produced an outcome of dubious success.

The Sindh Leaguers achieved their primary goal of bringing Allah Bux down but at great cost to both the League's image and Sindh's communal peace - results that raised serious question about the Leaguers ability to govern should they now come to power.

The Muslim League in any case could not harass Allah Bux Soomro but because of the riots they were successful in repressing the Hindu community. In this

terrible situation pedagogues of the two communities pressurised their Assembly members to withdraw from Allah Bux's ministry. The federation of Sindh panchayat also appointed a committee and authorised it to carry on negotiations with any party who safeguarded the interests of the Hindu community. The Mukhis of Sukkur and Shikarpur already met with Haji Abdullah Haroon, Shaikh Abdul Majid, Khan Bahadur Muhammad Ayub Khuhro and G. M. Sayed. The following points came under discussion.

1. Appointment of a tribunal to inquire into
   (i) Causes of Sukkur riots and
   (ii) The Muslim claims that Manzilgah was a mosque building.
2. Compensation to sufferers of Sukkur riots.
3. Non-interference with the procedure of laws as far as the Sukkur riot cases were concerned.
4. Percentage of communal representation in services.
5. Adequate measures for the protection of life and property in the disturbed areas.
6. Introduction of joint electorates in Sukkur and Shikarpur municipalities.

The Hindu party also negotiated with Allah Bux Soomro, but due to Soomro's poor response they patched up with the Muslim League on their twenty-one point demand draft.

G. M. Sayed has narrated the facts about Soomro's decision as under:

> 1. K. B. Allah Bux's failure at the last minute to accept the points.
> 2. The adamant attitude of the Upper Sindh Hindus against K.B. Allah Bux continuing to be Premier, and
> 3. The Hindu group's intrigue to bring in new Hindu ministers of their own choice.
>
> As regards the first factor, one may ask the question: when K.B. Allah Bux was in general agreement with all

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the twenty-one points, why did he refuse to accept them at the last minute? In order to get a correct answer to this question, I will have to take the reader with me in analysing the psychological factors that had worked on the Khan Bahadur's mind as a result of the bitter Assembly controversies of the previous two years.

By temperament, the Khan Bahadur was used to taking risks when the stakes were high. Once he was decided upon a particular line of action, he would not hesitate to stake his all on it. He was a shrewd contractor, and he could calculate everything in a businesslike manner. He would go to the extreme if he thought it necessary for the achievement of his object. He could woo the officials as successfully as he could make himself popular amongst the big *zamindars* by his lavish hospitality. By gestures of equal grace and charity, he could win the rank and file in the Assembly. At the time of the Assembly elections, he was able to carry the day against the hereditary *sardars* of tribes and big aristocratic families by staking his energy, money and all. Whatever he did was planned and calculated by him to ensure the achievement of a particular objective. But his calculations were not of the ordinary *bania* type, so that his gain must necessarily be commensurate with the investment. His only anxiety was success regardless of comparative figures of profit or loss. His methods were like those of a general who was determined to win a particular battle, without reference to the intrinsic value of the objective immediately to be gained.

Sindh under Mir Bandeh Ali Khan

After the fall of the Soomro ministry, progressive assembly members agreed on Shaikh Abdul Majid as a new premier of Sindh but the leader of the Mir Group, Mir Bandeh Ali Khan, did not agree to join the coalition unless he became the new premier. After some discussions and consultation all groups reached consensus on Mir Bandeh Ali and he formed his new ministry on 18th March 1940.

Report by the governor of the Sindh to the Viceroy.

Government House
23 March 1940

This contains my comments on my Government's fortnightly report for the first half of March. References are made to paragraphs of this report.

Paragraphs 3,11,12 and 14 the government lost their majority in the assembly just when they seemed to have put themselves in a position to squeeze through without losing any of the demands. I do not suppose that any collection of people professing to be parliamentary representatives has ever behaved in a more irresponsible manner. The anticipated defection of three Government supporters on no question of principle but merely in response to pressure from the Muslim League was thought to have been counterbalanced by the adherence of one member of the Congress and of two members of the Hindu independent party. The grant under discussion when the guillotine fell was passed by a majority of one and it was expected that, as the house was full; except for two persons kept away by the Muslim Leaguers that the outstanding grants would be put through without division. This process did indeed begin, but after some five grants were passed a division was challenged and two Hindus, one being an ex-minister, Mukhi Gobindram and the other, the independent communist, Beecher, changed sides. The solitary Congress Muslim persisted in his desertion of the Congress and in voting with Government.

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I have told you already by telegram how the speaker and the leader of House between them made serious mistakes, which resulted in the remaining grants not being put to the house at all. I hope I have got this right and that there will be no further trouble at the renewed session when the grants, which were refused, are to be submitted as a supplementary demand following the procedure accepted by the speaker in 1938. The new ministry was formed just as the period covered by this report had expired. I may be allowed to say here, however, that it is a combination of the third Hindu Independent group, the Muslim League group and the Baluch group. The third group had previously remained staunch with Government and its leader; Mir Bandeh Ali Khan Talpur was Revenue Minister in the last Government. The manner of his deserting Allah Bux is entirely discreditable according to our standards, but the general public of Sindh does not seem to be at all disturbed. The new Ministry appears to be composed of jarring elements and the only thing, which can keep them in office, is a desire to remain in office. Already in the distribution of portfolios signs of acute disagreement and lack of confidence have manifested themselves. For the present three of them are out of Karachi and I shall not be able to get much idea of whether they are going together or not until the session is resumed on the 26th. It is not very encouraging for me to know that the least competent man of the whole ministry is premier.

L. Graham

On the current political scenario of Sindh Conran Smith wrote to I. H. Taunton.

Home department
Government of Sindh
5th April 1940

My Dear Conran Smith
After his defeat ex-premier Khan Bahadur Allah Bux Soomro proceeded to Ramgarh on 7th March as briefly mentioned in my last report. The resignation of the Allah Bux ministry was accepted on the 18th March. The cabinet of the Hon'ble Mir Bandeh Ali Khan Talpur was sworn in on the same day being known as a nationalist government and containing representatives of all parties except the Congress, portfolios were allocated on 19th March, a noteworthy departure for previous arrangements being that the important revenue portfolio was given to a Hindu Minister, law and order being taken by the premier

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himself. The ministry consists of the following.

1. The Hon'ble Mir Bandeh Ali Khan Talpur, (Ex, Unionist), premier and minister for law and order.
2. The Hon'ble Mr. Nihchaldas C. Vazirani (Ex. Hindu, Independent) minister for revenue.
3. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Khuhro (Ex. Muslim League) minister for Public Works.
4. The Hon'ble Mr. G. M. Sayed (Ex. Muslim League) minister for education.
5. The Hon'ble Shaikh Abdul Majid (Ex-Muslim League) minister of finance.
6. The Hon'ble R. S. Gokaldas Mewaldas (Ex. Hindu-Independent) minister for local self-government and agriculture.

Yours sincerely
I.H. Taunton

The Muslim League was successful in its one aim at least in overthrowing the ministry of Allah Bux Soomro, but it failed to form its own ministry. Only three Muslim Leaguers - G. M. Sayed, Shaikh Abdul Majid and Mohammad Ayub Khuhro - joined as ministers in the nationalist government.

The ministry started its work under uncertain conditions. The Muslim League and Hindu Independent group formed the ministry but they were not in a position to bridge the gulf and to develop inter-communal confidence. The chief minister, Mir Bandeh Ali, was not a disreputable person, but he was not qualified for the post of premiership and in spite of the presence of talented and hard working ministers like G. M. Sayed and Shaikh Abdul Majid, his ministry was unable to show any positive and fruitful results. Chaotic conditions existed and the governor and civil bureaucracy did not cooperate with the ministry in developing a suitable atmosphere for effective governance but rather created hindrances. Seeing this state of affairs, G.M. Sayed made two attempts.

After the collapse of the Sindh United Party, Sayed together with both the communities formed a secular organisation, People's Association with the help of Shaikh

Abdul Majid, Jethmal Parsram and some other persons to suppress the sectarian wave in Sindh and forge unity in both.

Here is a report from I.H. Taunton to Conran Smith.

10th July 1940

Dear Conran Smith

A meeting of the Sindh People's Association was held on 18th June. The subjects of this newly started association is to inspire a sense of confidence in the minds of the rural population and to promote unity between the two communities. The association has been started mainly at the instance of the Hon'ble Shaikh Abdul Majid, Finance minister and comprises members of all communities. The honourable finance minister addressing the association stressed the necessity of organizing volunteer corps in the city for civic guard duty. Mr. Jethmal Parsram said that the association wanted to establish a volunteer federation in Karachi and to open branches throughout Sindh. Mr. Jethmal referring to the Sukkur Manzilgah dispute said that he intended shortly to proceed to Sukkur, where he would persuade the Hindus to settle the Manzilgah question amicably with the Muslims and hand over the Manzilgah to them unconditionally.

Yours sincerely
I. H. Taunton

The Sindh People's Association like the Sindh United Party did not survive and it had to abort its mission, because the all-India organisations and their leadership were feeling threatened, as narrated by G. M. Sayed.

> In order to counteract these moves against the new Ministry that had come into being as the result of the settlement between the communities, the sane element amongst the Hindus started the Sindh People's Association, where Hindus and Muslims were to meet, discuss controversial issues and keep in touch with public opinion and educate it on the right lines. This was the second attempt to bring about a real understanding between the communities. But in spite of the sincere

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efforts of various persons, Hindus and Muslim, working in that direction, the Association did not succeed in its mission on account of the following reasons:

The hostile attitude of the Congress

(a) The Congress due to its prejudice against the Muslim League took a hostile attitude against the Association from the very outset.
(b) As the new party was non-communal in its nature and provincial in its scope, it did not enjoy the favour of the Congress, as the latter considered it to be a likely rival which, as it gained strength, might weaken the Congress in Sindh, where its position had already deteriorated and its reputation had suffered owing to its wrong policies.
(c) That group in the Congress, which was always aiming at the all-India issues, had lost in K.B. Allah Bux its stalwart as a nationalist Muslim premier. Anxious to bring him back into office, it considered the Association as an impediment in its way.

Although the fire of the Sukkur riots had subsided, its ashes were not yet quite cold; and in spite of the settlement arrived at between the communities, the Hindu extremists on the one hand and Muslim extremists on the other continued to pull in opposite directions, with the result that the communal atmosphere continued to remain unsettled. As such the efforts of the Sindh People's Association could not go very far.

Due to lack of sufficient workers and funds the Association was not able to cope with and counteract against the vicious propaganda that was being carried on by extremists through their well-established papers. Therefore the well-meaning individuals who were workers for the Association could not find any effective means for dealing with the unfavourable situation.

Idealism, A Natural Orbit

G. M. Sayed narrated in his book *Jannam Guzariam Jinsein* that although Allah Bux Soomro had no interest in idealistic politics however the experience of 15 years forced him into the arms of idealism.

He started such politics in April 1940, when he had presided over the Azad Muslim Conference of Muslim nationalists at Delhi and within no time touched new heights of greatness. Allah Bux Soomro and other Muslim nationalist politicians felt that the communal wave had gripped the entire Asian subcontinent and had produced only an atmosphere of hatred and violence, so in that predicament they organised an Azad Muslim conference in Delhi from 27 to 28 April 1940.

W. C. Smith recounted the conference as under:

> The Azad Muslim conference. In March 1940 there gathered at Delhi representatives of the various Indian nationalist Muslim parties and groups. The Congress Muslims, Ahrars, Jamiat-ul-ulama, Shiah Political conference and so on, virtually all-Muslim groups except; the Muslim League and the Khaksars. Allah Bux, premier of Sindh, presided at this Azad Muslim conference.
>
> The delegates representing at that time probably still the majority of Indian Muslims, came to protest against the Pakistan idea and against the use made of the Muslims by the British Government and others as an excuse for political inaction.
>
> They strongly supported the Congress's plans for an Indian Constituent Assembly, elected by full adult suffrage, to draw up a constitution for India; the Muslim delegates to that assembly to be elected communally, and to have the power to device safeguards for Muslim culture, personal law, political rights and economic position. This was to be without interference from any

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other community, including the British. The conference set up an executive called the Azad Muslim Board, "to preach communal amity and to devise means for a permanent solution of the communal problem"[24]. Further, it resolved: "India, with its geographical and political boundaries is an indivisible whole. All nooks and corners of the country contain hearths and homes of the Muslims and the cherished historic monuments of their religion and culture, which are dearer to them than their lives. This conference unreservedly and strongly repudiates the baseless charge leveled against Indian Muslims by the agents of British imperialism and others that they are an obstacle in the path of Indian freedom and emphatically declares that the Muslims are fully alive to their responsibility and consider it inconsistent with their tradition and derogatory to their honour to lag behind others in the struggle for the country's independence.[25]

The conference and its executive met from time to time thereafter, and continued to lobby for Indian freedom. But the group that they represented was dwindling rapidly.

The Independent Muslim Conference

First Session - New Delhi - 27th April to 30th April 1940

The open session of the All-India Azad (Independent) Muslim Conference commenced in the Queen's Gardens, New Delhi on the 27 April 1940 and continued till 30 April 1940 under the presidency of Khan Bahadur Allah Bux.

Welcome Address

Describing himself as a great supporter of the All-India Muslim League, Khan Bahadur Shaikh Mohammed Jan,

24. Sarkar, Hindustan year Book, 1911, P, 465
25. From a resolution adopted at the conference; given in Rajendara Prasad, Pakistan. P.P. 1-2.

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Chairman of the Reception Committee, in his welcome address, said:
It is true that many Mussalmans feel annoyed by the past wait-and-see policy of the Congress to solve the communal problem. And the apathy of eminent Congress leaders to take up this important and most difficult question in right earnest has caused dissatisfaction. But there is no doubt that unprecedented and earnest efforts have for the last two years been made by Gandhi and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru to smooth Hindu-Muslim relations in order to bring both the communities to a common meeting ground by entering into direct correspondence with Mr. Jinnah and by personal contact with him on his own terms. Had Mr. Jinnah responded to any of these eager gestures in the right spirit, Hindus and Mussalmans would be marching shoulder to shoulder to their goal of independence and full dominion status would have been in our grasp today and not be a mere object of hope deferred to an uncertain future.

It is my strong belief that tremendous changes are going to take place in the world in the near future, which will not leave India unaffected. The present-day India is not going to be a stagnant country content with its subordinate position. Should not the Mussalmans make their due contribution to the coming changes? Will it be honourable for them to do nothing but put forward their claim as full partners in the spoils after the battle is fought and won by others? I hope that this Conference will not only discover a common formula for safeguarding the due rights and privileges of the Mussalmans of India but will also chalk out a great plan for them to make proper sacrifices worthy of the great community for the cause of the country.

Presidential Address

In the course of his Presidential Address, Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh declared:
If Germany's ruthless and brutal disregard of the right of other sovereign states to live peacefully is a challenge to civilisation and therefore Britain and France must stake their all in it, Britain should be the last to challenge India's right to exist as a sovereign and completely independent state and should, therefore, not obstruct its people if they desire to frame their own constitution. Mr. Baksh also condemned the Pakistan scheme of the Muslim League characterising it as grotesque and observed that it was

about the most indiscreet approach to a serious problem and as such has torpedoed the very basis of a reasonable settlement.

Proceeding, Mr. Baksh said, it is this conference and this conference alone today which is in a position to evolve a constructive scheme to bring the political deadlock to an end. If you can come to an agreement as regards the basis of a communal settlement, the Congress, which is undoubtedly the most influential and powerful organisation in the country today, is bound to consider your proposals as the one golden bridge which leads not merely to communal and political harmony in the country but to the ultimate goal, namely India's independence. Perhaps your decisions are being awaited both in the country and abroad with great impatience, because on them will depend a very great deal. I am perfectly confident in my mind that the Congress will not hesitate to endorse our reasonable proposals for the communal settlement. The Congress can no longer say that the scattered Muslim organisations and individuals that are eager to attain the country's freedom have not yet formulated their proposals on behalf of the Muslim community for the settlement of the entire communal problem.

It is perfectly obvious that whatever scheme of settlement you may eventually evolve for safeguarding the rights and interests of the minorities, whether they happen to be in a Hindu or Muslim majority provinces, you keep in view the principle of equal and universal application of the same standard to all of them everywhere.

DANGER OF AGGRESSIVE COMMUNALISM

Warning his audience that aggressive communalism was fatal to the growth of that feeling to brotherliness, good neighbourliness and common nationality which were essential, not merely for the acceleration of a common national effort but also for the maintenance of an atmosphere of peace, progress and stability in the country. Mr. Allah Baksh urged that a fair adjustment of the general needs of the country and the various communities should be undertaken in a spirit of generosity and tolerance and of right brotherly affection for one another. Whatever our faiths, we must live together in our country in an atmosphere of perfect amity and our relations should be the relations of several brothers of a joint family, the

various members of which are free to profess the faith they like without any let or hindrance and all of whom enjoy equal benefits of their joint property.

To achieve the objects outlined by him, the President suggested the election of committees or boards consisting of a limited number of representatives of the delegates to consider the problem. He said the question of formulating definite proposals for the communal settlement is scarcely a matter, which can be disposed of quickly at a conference like this. It will require deep and anxious thought and continuous consultations for some .time before the result of the Board or sub-committee's labours can be presented to you in a convenient form. I, therefore, suggest that a board consisting of the representatives of different associations and others may be formed to undertake this onerous duty and they may be authorised to co-opt experts or others to help them to come to correct conclusions. Their report as soon as it is ready and I take it they will take some time to conclude their labours should come up before another session of this conference and after it has been ratified with or without modifications, it should be released to the country for the consideration of all parties concerned. In the meantime we can appoint some executive of this conference for the purpose of carrying on intensive constructive work among the Mussalmans throughout the country. We can also name a day or days for echo-meetings throughout the country for making known to the millions of Mussalmans the result of deliberations of our conference. All this is essential because a great deal of educative work has to be done and Muslim electorates have to be prepared to consider the larger issues which their yokes will ultimately have to decide.

Mr. Allah Baksh dealt at considerable length with the Muslim League's partition scheme, the League-Congress efforts for a settlement and with the background of a communal strife in India. He said, not service but rule, not fruitful cooperation but domination, not a general elevation of the level of common prosperity and material benefits but the enrichment of a new families at the cost of millions of their supporters, not a common willing effort to construct a comfortable world for all alike but graded scale of benefits, the maximum to go to the most intriguing and the Hindu and Muslim masses to grovel in the dust and squalor of their villages and urban slums have been the main aspects of the history of all the Hindu,

Muslim and British Empires in India up to now. Islam, on the other hand, does not prevent anyone from developing his natural gifts to the full and enjoying the fruits of his skill and labour. It does not work for dead level but it forbids exploitation in all shapes and forms and all parties concerned will do well to note this as a fair warning against any attempt to found a structure of government in which domination, coercion or exploitation of the Muslim masses may be possible.

BRITAIN AND INDIA

After reviewing rapidly the history of events, which has led to the present communal and constitutional impasse, the President said, by far the most disturbing feature for Great Britain in the present struggle, from the point of view of world opinion, is the anomalous relationship between England and India. If Germany's ruthless and brutal disregard of the right of other sovereign states to live peacefully is a challenge to civilisation and therefore Britain and France must stake their all on it, Britain should be the last to challenge India's right to exist as a sovereign and completely independent state and should, therefore, not obstruct.

Its people if they desire to frame their own constitution. Sooner or later this principle on which the whole of that civilisation is based and for whose preservation millions of Englishmen and Frenchmen are ready to lay down their lives cannot fail to be recognised by Britain. Sooner or later, therefore, England must make up her mind to honour the cheque, which she has proclaimed that she has drawn in India's favour. By the unwise action of the All-India Muslim League however, England, for the time being, has found it possible to bring the Indian Muslims to the fore and has declared that since the Congress, whose representative position in eight out of eleven provinces cannot be constitutionally questioned, has not yet made its peace with the Muslim League, the encashment of the dominion status cheque must be deferred indefinitely.

Proceeding, Mr. Baksh pointed out that the Muslims of India appeared in the eyes of the world as the main obstacle in the way of India's progress as a whole. No Mussalmans with the slightest sense of realism and self-respect can possibly tolerate for a moment that he should be made a political scapegoat and the evil consequences

of the process should be allowed to react unfavourably on his own and the coming generation's political and material future, he said. The proposal, if not promptly and authoritatively repudiated by a representative gathering like this, is calculated to cause infinite harm to our Indian co-religionists throughout the Muslim and non-Muslim parts of the world and much more so at home.

LEAGUE'S CREDENTIALS QUESTIONED

Contesting the claim of the Muslim League as the sole representative body of the Indian Mussalmans, Mr. Allah Baksh said that the representative character of the Congress as a political party with a majority in seven and controlling power in the eighth province was comprehensive. But whose credentials beyond public meetings does the League present to be recognised as the representative of the majority of Indian Muslims? The only way to test its representative character would be to send the League to the polls on the specific issue of the policy it has declared at Lahore. For whatever may have been its support before in the provinces where the Muslims are in a minority, it has definitely injured it beyond repair by suddenly throwing the minority Muslims overboard and propounding a wholly impracticable scheme of creating a sovereign state of some crores of Punjabi, Sindhi, Pathan and Baloch Muslims in the northwest and another of about two and a half crores of Assamese and Bengali Muslims in the north-east separated by over a thousand miles. Only after these dreams have materialised will these sovereign and independent states begin to negotiate a treaty for the protection of the Muslim minorities throughout India. If the Muslim minorities in Hindu majority provinces are to wait for the protection of their rights till these independent and sovereign States of the Punjab and Bengal have come into existence, they will have to wait till the Greek Calends.

TWO-NATION THEORY

Dealing with the two-nation theory of certain leading Muslim politicians of admittedly Indian origin, Mr. Allah Baksh said that Indian Muslims were proud to be Indian nationals and they were equally proud that their spiritual level and cradle was Islam. Every Arab invariably described every Muslim going for pilgrimage to the holy

Mecca as a Hindu and all Indian Muslims were similarly known as Hindustani in Iran and Afghanistan and as Indians throughout the world. A majority of the ninety million Indian Muslims who are descendants of the earlier inhabitants of India are in no sense other than sons of the soil with the Dravidian and the Aryan and have as much right to be reckoned among the earliest settlers of this common land. The nationals of different countries cannot divest themselves of their nationality merely by embracing one or the other faith. In its universal sweep, Islam, the faith, can run in and out of as many nationalities and regional cultures as may be found in the world.

After describing the bonds that knitted the Hindus and the Muslims in various walks of human life, Mr. Allah Bash declared that no segregated or isolated region but the whole of India was the homeland of all the Indian Muslims and no Hindu or Muslim or any other had the right to deprive them of their homeland.

PARTITION PROPOSALS EXAMINED

Analysing the Partition scheme, the speaker said that if the six million of N. W. F. Province, Baluch and Sindhi Muslims were excluded from the north-west Pakistan because they had a more realistic sense of things, the Punjab, with a population of 1 1/4 crore of Muslims, confined between Campbellpore and perhaps Lahore; would constitute a problematic little Pakistan with rather drastically curtailed financial resources and reduced to the position of one of the bigger Indian states. I have heard it said that the Sikhs and the Jats or at least the Sikhs could be won over by fair concessions to remain in this Pakistan. Of course such an infantile assumption proceeds on the basis that the bargaining power of the others does not exist. Once again, if over a crore of Sikhs and Jats and other Hindus of the Punjab choose to stay in this Pakistan, one fails to see how it will be different in political composition and power from the present autonomous provinces and in what sense it will become an independent, sovereign Islamic state. In the first place, the N. W. F. Province, Balochistan and Sindh which now enjoy comfortable majorities in autonomous provinces helped by the centre financially and in the matter of defence would not care to exchange their present position for a minority in another unit, though overwhelmingly Muslim.

But if for the sake of argument they did, who would bear, asked Mr. Baksh, their deficit of over Rs. 2 $^1/_2$ crores and what guarantee, without efficient financial resources, would the Punjab offer regarding land, air and sea defences against not merely the external but the internal invaders? The total revenue of the proposed Pakistan, if all the units contemplated including Kashmir and Bahawalpur coalesced (excluding the region which is predominantly Hindu-cum-Sikh. would not exceed Rs. 16 or 17 crores, all of which was required for daily administration. And if the railways and customs and other central revenues of Pakistan's share yielded, say, another five or six or even ten crores of net surplus, the whole of it would not be enough to maintain the defences of the unit against external invasions and to satisfy the interest charges and other liabilities. It was true that the unit if allowed a period of peace and prosperity might develop its industries and build up like Czechoslovakia a decent enough position and defence force, but why should it be assumed that the rest of India would all this time stand still and so would the transborder neighbors including Russia, and that their resources would not be put to the best use. Who then would defend this unit against Russia or Afghanistan in the meanwhile in case a new builder of a Russian or some other empire rose? If the British were asked to hold this baby until it was strong enough to stand on its own legs, in the first place what was the *quid pro quo,* and in the second what was this smokescreen of an independent sovereign and Islamic state for?

Northeast Pakistan is ten times more fantastic and a hundred times more fragile, said Mr. Baksh. In the conception of the north-western Pakistan or the Punjab, there is at least a possibility of its being linked up with more powerful Afghan or Russian Muslim neighbours, but the Bengal and Assam Pakistan will be an isolation quarantine, with no superfluity of martial races to its credit, and which, therefore, may not take long to be quickly absorbed by its more enterprising neighbours. But if the League does not contemplate anything better than Burma and Ceylon, the credulous should not be deceived into thinking of an independent Islamic state but they should be frankly told that another Palestine is sought to be created; under the British mandate. Let us not waste time on this part of the grotesque scheme.

It is a matter for some satisfaction that responsible

spokesmen of the British Government have scotched this scheme at the outset. We may, however, hope that the indirect and subtle encouragement some influential individual Englishmen have so far given to the sponsors of the scheme, for obvious reasons, will not continue to vitiate a perfectly straight issue. It should be carefully noted that no responsible minister of the Punjab cared to lend the slightest support to the scheme nor has any popular support been forthcoming from either the Punjab or Bengal. It is quite obvious that if ever a decision along these lines was ever likely to be taken, it would rest not with a political organisation or a party but with the accredited representatives of the population concerned and, therefore, it is difficult to understand the League's objection to a Constituent Assembly in which Indian Mussalmans should decide the question of the form of constitution under which they would be prepared to live peacefully. If the population of the majority provinces does not want the League's Pakistan and if the Muslim minority in the Hindu majority provinces cannot dictate to the Muslim majority province, it is difficult to see on what constitutional basis the League can possibly advance its demand. To my mind, it is perfectly obvious that a political personality of Mr. Jinnah's distinction cannot but admit the force of this argument and therefore I am inclined to believe that the Pakistan scheme is about the most indiscreet approach to a serious problem and as such has torpedoed the very basis of a reasonable settlement.

Referring to the world situation, Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh described the present world war as the birth pangs of a New World Order. He said that all right-thinking men had condemned the aggressor to human freedom and civilisation. Where ultimately all this will lead none can clearly foresee, but one thing is certain beyond a shadow of doubt that unless the brutal and ruthless methods of the aggressor are checked and also the ambitious maps of all the empires are rolled up, whether they are based on democratic or totalitarian ideologies, the peace and prosperity for which the vast bulk of mankind has been pining for will not come into sight.

Report by the Governor

Government House Karachi
22nd May 1940

K.B. Allah Bux came extremely pleased with himself from Delhi and his stock has gone up in Sindh where he is now regarded as an all-India leader

Allah Bux Soomro as a nationalist leader introduced the aims and objectives of Azad Muslim Conference in Sindh and he called a meeting of his colleagues to chalk out a programme.

The following is a report by the governor of the Sindh.

Government House, Karachi
7th June 1940

A meeting of about seven nationalist Muslims of Karachi was held at the residence of Khan Bahadur Allah Bux, O. B. E., and M. L. A. ex-premier. A provincial committee was formed with Khan Bahadur Allah Bux as chairman, Pir Illahi Bux, ex-minister and Mr. Mohammad Amin Khoso, M.L.A, as secretaries for drafting rules: and it was decided to call a provincial conference later on.

Yours sincerely
I. H. Taunton

Governor's report about another meeting

Government House, Karachi
10th July

My Dear Conran Smith
The meeting at Jacobabad was held on the 22nd June and was addressed among others by the ex-premier, Khan Bahadur Allah Bux O. B. E., who urged the people to throw off the yoke of the foreign Government as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely
I. H. Taunton

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The leadership of the Azad Muslim Conference met again in Delhi, to review the results of their last conference and to devise a fresh programme in the light of their work and achievements.

THE CENTRAL OFFICE OF THE ALL-INDIA AZAD MUSLIM PARTIES CONFERENCE

Delhi, 15th August 1940

Sir,

The All-India Muslim Parties Conference held from April 27 to May 1, 1940, at Delhi, appointed a Board of 28 members to undertake a survey of the causes of Hindu - Muslim differences in India and to formulate definite proposals for a permanent and just settlement of the communal problem for the consideration of all the parties concerned. The international and the Indian political situations have been in a state of swift flux and, although a permanent national solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem is still a desideratum, efforts have been made in different quarters to reach a provisional arrangement. While these efforts were being made, it appeared that the permanent nature of the task with which the Board was entrusted would not suffer by a temporary delay. It is now perfectly clear that the responsibility of the Board has been considerably increased by the failure of the efforts which have been made during the past, and no time can now be lost in waiting for the results of further efforts in this direction by other parties.

The Board has the honour to submit a questionnaire to all concerned with a view to providing them with a basis for considering the problems, which await solution. In settling this questionnaire, the history of the Hindu-Muslim problem from its inception to the present times has been borne in mind. When the time comes for the Board to draft their report and recommendations, perhaps a brief but exhaustive review of the entire background may have to be undertaken, in which the following points may claim a place:

(1) The advent of Islam prior to the settlement of Muslims in India, e.g., commercial traffic between India and Muslim countries, and the quiet infiltration of Islamic teachings through traders and divines visiting Sindh, Malabar and other parts of India.

(2) A brief history of Hindu-Muslim relations in India during the past 1000 years, apart from relations arising out of the establishment of Muslims in several parts of the country with governmental authority.

(3) Distribution of Hindus and Muslims in India under the British rule and its political effect. Linguistic and cultural

areas, which have sprung up during the culturally homogeneous lines.

(4) Economic condition of Muslim masses and the causes of their poverty. Also, the desirability of a political structure under which poverty and unemployment may not handicap the Muslim masses.

(5) Causes of Muslim backwardness in modern education and its political consequences. Also the necessity of a political programme for the educational uplift of Muslims.

(6) Claim for preferential treatment in services under the British Government and its effects in the past and the advantages or disadvantages of any permanent reliance on such an arrangement. Also, a considered scheme for liquidating the existing disparity in services.

(7) The old structure of Shariat law and the possibility of its restoration under modern conditions in a modern state.

(8) Cultural development, language, literature, script, fine arts and the common basis of the latter among Indian Muslims.

(9) Variations from province to province of linguistic, social and even cultural distinctions between Musalmans and Musalmans. Points of contact with other communities and the resulting consequences.

(10) A common basis of the economic structure of the whole country, and the place of Indian Muslims in the agrarian, commercial and industrial life of the country with varying conditions in different provinces.

(11) Hindu-Muslim relations under the British Government and their deterioration with political advancement and the approaching prospect of transfer of power.

(12) Efforts to effect political adjustments for cooperation on a common basis.

(a) Congress-League Scheme of 1916 (for provincial autonomy mainly)-

(b) Congress-Khilafat approach of 1919 (for self-government).

(c) Period of serious distemper and keen communal bitterness and communal riots of 1922 and 1924 as the result of the first shock of virtual failure and consequent dispersal of national elements into communal groups.

(d) Delhi Unity Conference of 1924

(e) Calcutta League Resolution of 1927 (a fresh political approach)

(f) Nehru Report of 1928 (a fresh attempt at a political solution).

(g) The Allahabad Unity Conference of 1932 (a further attempt at a political settlement).

(h) Finally, all the other steps that had been taken to solve the communal problem since 1932 up to date and their results.

It is felt that only by a careful review of the entire background and an exhaustive survey of all the problems which have arisen during the past 1000 years and the conditions under the British Government which have culminated in the accentuation of the present attitude among important political sections, both Hindu and Muslim, can a proper appreciation of the present situation be made and it is in the light of the actual problems confronting the Muslim community in India today that any approach to the solution of the communal problem can be attempted. Neither this questionnaire nor the material supplied herewith pretends to be either exhaustive or in any sense a rigid framework. It is for the majority of the Indian Muslims to come to their own conclusions in every respect. This is no more than a basis for discussion and an attempt to invite your attention to the consideration of the problems, which you feel required to be solved.

You are requested to be so kind as to favour the Board with your valuable ideas to enable them to draft their recommendations to the next session of the Conference, in accordance with the just requirements of the Indian Muslims. This questionnaire is being addressed to all prominent Indian Muslims for eliciting their opinion, and it is also being released to the Press. You are requested to send in your written suggestions by 25th September 1940, to enable the Board to tabulate them for inclusion in the material, which is to form the basis of their recommendations. The final decision will rest with the next Conference, in which, it is earnestly hoped, you will participate to help the formation of a wise and urgently needed programme for the Musalmans of India.

Allah Bakhsh
President,
The All India Azad
Muslim Parties Board

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. In view of the fact that Hindus, Muslims and other inhabitants of India have lived side by side with one

another for over 1000 years, is it not necessary that a form of Government should be devised for the country as a whole under which while the country should enjoy the same freedom, and sovereignty as other independent countries of the world, all the inhabitants of India, whatever their religious or political beliefs, should be guaranteed joint partnership in all the resources of the country and full rights of equal citizenship in every walk of life and in every department of the state?

2. Do you consider it necessary that in connection with fundamental rights a chapter of special rights of religious groups in the constitution should be included, whether these groups happen to be in a minority or in a majority in the country as a whole or in any part thereof?

3. (a) What religious rights of Muslims do you think should be included in fundamental rights?
(b) What political or judicial machinery would you suggest for
(i) the determination and
(ii) the just settlement of such rights?

1. (a) What political, economic, cultural and social rights of groups and individuals would you include for general citizenship in the fundamental rights?
(b) By what constitutional or judicial machinery and procedure, would you secure their inviolability?

2. Would you, for instance, lay down in respect of all the foregoing questions that
(a) Neither the country as a whole, nor any part of it, nor the resources thereof shall be claimed by any particular community, group or party as their exclusive domain and the constitutional structure of the country as a whole shall be federal and non-unitary, and the provinces or federal units or states shall be fully autonomous in all respects, the federal centre, exercising only such and so many powers on behalf of the several federal units as may relate to matters of common interest only according to an agreed list of federal subjects such for instance as external affairs, defence, communications, customs, harbours, territorial waters, lighthouses, etc.
(b) Neither the federal nor the provincial Government shall have any state religion, nor shall they give grants-in-aid to, nor endow any institutions or movements out of the revenues of the state, but if any religious community, by a majority of 75% of its representatives, desires to levy a special tax or cess from that community for the

endowment or maintenance of a denominational institution, the federal or the provincial State may enact a measure to create a statutory trust of the community concerned, and may assist the Trust to realise the tax? Or would you have it otherwise?

(c) For the purposes of fundamental rights all Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and Parsis, whatever their subdivisions, shall each constitute one religious community and the others, shall be classified according to the fundamental distinction of the first article of their faith or belief.

(d) Fundamental rights shall include the following:

- Freedom of association and combination.
- Freedom of expression of opinion.
- Freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion.
- Protection of the personal laws, culture, language, education, scripts, places of worship and burial, Aukaf and charitable institutions of various religious communities:
- Equal rights and obligations of all citizens without any distinction of sex:
- No disability shall attach to any citizen by reason of his or her religion, caste or creed or sex in regard to public employment, office of power or honour and in the exercise of any trade or calling,
- Equal rights of all citizens in regard to public roads, wells, schools, places of public resort, and all other public institutions:
- Right to keep and bear arms subject to general regulations applicable to all alike:
- No person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered. sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law;
- Universal suffrage
- Free primary education
- A minimum living wage for all kinds of labourers, limited hours, healthy conditions of work, protection against the economic consequences of old age, sickness and unemployment;
- The state shall guarantee that no citizen shall remain unemployed and shall receive a minimum allowance from the state in case of involuntary unemployment.

(e) In the matter of faith, religious belief and observances, personal laws, language scripts, culture and the right to preach to others, religious groups shall be free and fully autonomous, provided that individuals shall have the freedom to change and declare their faith and change of faith shall involve no punishment nor shall any one be coerced to conform to any particular social behaviour or religious observance.

(f) Neither the federal nor the provincial state, nor any local or statutory body shall change the nature of any religious institution or place of worship, burial or cremation, statutorily or voluntarily maintained The state shall ensure the uninterrupted enjoyment of all lawful rights and religious practices.

(g) No Wakf property or property dedicated to God or gods shall under any circumstances, notwithstanding the law of transfer, limitation, prescription, confiscation or otherwise be used for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was intended, provided that this provision shall have no retrospective effect.

(h) No person shall be debarred by legislation, executive action or by social pressure from any kind of food allowed by his belief, nor shall any such person be obstructed by legislation, executive action, the action of a statutory or local body, or by coercion in the pursuit of any trade, profession or calling.

(i) No citizen shall be debarred from any public service (which shall include service under any government or local or statutory body or any body corporate or any Government aided or subsidised concern) merely on account of any disability based on sex, religion or creed.

(j) No provision of the constitution which relates to the exclusive rights and interests of the various religious groups shall be valid unless it is agreed to by the representatives of the group concerned, provided provisions validly formulated by the groups concerned shall be incorporated in the constitution. No such constitutional provision shall be added to, amended or modified without the approval of the group concerned.

(ii) No legislative measure adversely affecting any of the fundamental rights of a religious group shall be introduced into the legislature unless the group concerned agrees to it.

(iii) Every social or religious measure relating to the personal law of a religious group, which does not affect another religious group, if desired by a

majority of the entire representatives of the group concerned shall be passed by the appropriate legislature.

(iv) No restriction shall be placed on the movement of any citizen from one part of India to another and all shall enjoy equal rights of citizenship throughout the country.

(v) There shall be no discriminatory legislation.

(vi) All grievances based on the contravention of any of the fundamental rights or of any provision of the constitution shall be cognisable by a bench of the appropriate provincial high court, and an appeal shall lie to the Supreme or the Federal Court, as the case may be.

6. (a) Would you suggest the continuance and maintenance of the proportion of posts in all-India services sanctioned by the Central Government up to the end of 1940? Or, have you any alternative suggestion?

(b) What proportion of posts would you suggest for minorities, in services under the provincial government and under the local and statutory bodies?

7. Will you kindly make your suggestions with respect to the method and manner of election to various legislatures and other elected bodies and also with regard to the question of reservation of seats?

8. What are your suggestions with reasons therefore as regards:

i. Redistribution of provinces, if any;
ii. Formation of Cabinets;
iii. Composition of defence services;
iv. The structure of provincial judiciary, and
v. The composition of public services commissions.

9. What in your opinion should be the state language for federal and inter-provincial contacts and communications? Should it not be the commonly spoken Hindustani language of upper India, which is widely understood in the major part of the country?

10. Have you any suggestions to make with regard to:

i. Relief of indebtedness and
ii. The control of usury and interest.

11. Will you kindly state your views with respect to general prohibition of intoxicants, drugs and opium and further suggest how best this end can be achieved?

12. What have you to say about conditions of serfdom and exorbitant agricultural rents if they still prevail in your province?

13. Are you aware of any section of Muslims who suffer from certain social disabilities? If so, how do you propose to secure just and equal treatment for them?

14. Please finally make whatever other suggestions you think necessary for a just and permanent settlement of the communal or any other relevant problem?

As a Minister

A major shortcoming of the government of Mir Bandeh Ali was its inability to deal with the problems of the masses and its apparent failure to establish peace in the province.

This weakness alerted the Muslim and Hindu Assembly members who consequently began to see things more clearly amid the political fog.

G. M. Sayed felt that the existing political scenario of Sindh needed unity of both communities, so he in his second attempt requested Allah Bux Soomro and the Congress to help them in overcoming those difficulties.

Asif Ali came to Karachi for a personal visit and Sayed hosted a lunch in his honour at his residence. Allah Bux Soomro and many other personalities turned up for the luncheon. Though the efforts to accommodate K.B. Allah Bux group had already been in progress, Sayed used up the opportunity to persuade Allah Bux Soomro in the presence of Asif Ali to join the ministry. This was a particularly testing time as sporadic murders of Hindus were taking place. And in order to put an end to this unfortunate situation, many Hindus also were of the opinion that unity and cooperation among Muslim M.L.A's alone could assure them the necessary security of life in the rural areas. Allah Bux Soomro agreed to this proposal but conditionally, that instead of him Sir Ghulam Hussain Shaikh should join the ministry. In the meanwhile when talks were underway Allah Bux Soomro attended the session of the Congress working committee in Bombay as an observer.

G. M. Sayed recounted later that in Bombay the Congress leadership assured Soomro of support as a premier as soon as the existing ministry was brought down. Sayed further commented that although this information

disappointed him. yet he did not lose hope and continued to pursue the matter with Allah Bux.

The local Congress leadership also requested Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to visit Sindh and help in removing the prevailing feeling of insecurity in Sindh and thawing the ice between the two communities.

The ministry also appreciated this idea and backed the step. Premier Mir Bandeh Ali Khan and Ayub Khuhro, the minister for public works, received Maulana Abul Kalam Azad at Drigh Road Airport. Later G. M. Sayed and Shaikh Abdul Majid went to call on him at his residence.

Sayed and Shaikh Abdul Majid had a forthright exchange on the problems pertaining to Sindh. Maulana Sahib commented that some Hindus were of the view that these problems emanated from the disunity of Muslim MLA's.

At this juncture Maulana Azad offered to broker a settlement between the two parties. G. M. Sayed and Shaikh Majid gave a favourable response and told him that they would convene a meeting of all Muslim members. So a meeting was held at the residence of Mir Bandeh Ali Khan. Abul Kalam Azad was then convinced that Muslim unity was a desired goal of all members. Allah Bux Soomro group was of the same opinion and their attitude was positive. Abul Kalam Azad then suggested that in an effort to forge such unity; the ministry should be formed by all groups. For the express purpose he suggested the names of two ministers from the Allah Bux Soomro group.

This development did not suit the Congress and some Muslim members of Assembly. The Congress put pressure on Soomro that he should not accept any agreement until and unless he was made the premier.

Abul Kalam Azad also faced a dilemma, that on the one hand his Congress party was opposed to a settlement

and, on the other hand, the Hindu group and Muslim intelligentsia were in favour of the formation of a United Muslim party.

Abul Kalam Azad was swayed by the latter group and he suggested that the premiership should be left to the majority of the Muslim members.

Allah Bux Soomro agreed to the formula but raised one objection that instead of him, Ghulam Hussain, would join the ministry and he would come in place of Mir Bandeh Ali Khan, as premier after his resignation.

G. M. Sayed and Nihchaldas Vazirani approached Allah Bux Soomro to accept a place in the ministry himself. Soomro responded positively and honoured the request of both his colleagues. In the purview of the progress achieved, G. M. Sayed and Nihchaldas Vazirani prepared the draft of agreement and G. M. Sayed and Mohammad Ayub Khuhro signed the draft and formerly handed it over to Nihchaldas. Sir Abdullah Haroon, the president of Sindh Muslim League who was out of Karachi, after he returned to the city sent a letter to G. M. Sayed not to resign from the ministry. Sayed in the light of that letter met with Sir Abdullah Haroon and explained his position to him. But his explanation was not treated with favour.

Shaikh Abdul Majid had obeyed the orders of the party and asserted that he would not resign.

G. M. Sayed and Shaikh Abdul Majid met with Abul Kalam Azad the same day and acquainted him in the presence of Allah Bux Soomro with the current situation and requested them for some more time.

Abul Kalam Azad expressed his inability to prolong his stay because it was the tenth day since his arrival. However, he suggested to both groups that they should settle matters amicably. He further warned that certain

interested persons might want to undo whatever had been agreed upon.

Eventually Sayed honoured the agreement and resigned from the ministry. Sayed has narrated events as under:

> I realised that though I had not acted with the due circumspection in making this agreement on my own initiative, yet as a responsible man, it was my bounden duty to keep my word. I therefore immediately proceeded along with K. B. Allah Bux Soomro to the Government House and placed my resignation in the hands of governor.
>
> I submitted resignation to the governor on 22nd November, 1940 and it was accepted on the following day and on the same day, K. B. Allah Bux Soomro was sworn in at the same time, a joint parliamentary advisory committee comprised of representatives from among all the different parties in the Assembly was appointed with the object of advising and assisting the government in legislative and other matters. This committee consisted of the following gentlemen:
>
> 1. Mr. Bandeh Ali Khan (chairman)
> 2. Mr. G. M. Sayed (secretary)
> 3. K.B. Muhammad Ayub Khuhro
> 4. Shaikh Abdul Majid
> 5. Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah
> 6. Pir Illahi Bux
> 7. Mohammad Hashim Gazdar
> 8. Mr. Newandram
> 9. Mr. Nihchaldas
> 10. R. S. Gokaldas
> 11. Mr. R. K. Sidhwa
> 12. Mr. Naraindas Beechar
> 13. Dr. Choithram
> 14. Mr. Fraser
>
>   One from Hindu independent and
>
> 16 K.B. Allah Bux Soomro

Governor's report to the Viceroy on the current political development of Sindh.

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Home Department of Sindh.
5th December 1940

Dear Conran Smith
The most important political event of the week was the reshuffling of the ministry due to intervention of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. So far the only result has been the resignation of Mr. Sayed a Muslim leader and his replacement by the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Allah Bux. Khan Bahadur belongs to the Azad Muslim party and his inclusion in the ministry has been welcomed by the Congress and by some members of the Hindu party but not in Muslim League circles. Together with the change in the ministry and advisory committee of sixteen members of the legislative assembly has been formed including all the honourable ministers, to advise the cabinet on matters of policy and legislation. Mr. G. M. Sayed has been appointed secretary of this committee. The Sindh Legislative Assembly met on the 27th November for the first time since the last budget session and is now in session. It is reported that the Congress leaders of the province have been instructed by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad not to participate in the present *Satyagarh* movement until such time as conditions in the province improve.

Yours sincerely
L. Graham

Government of Sindh
8th December 1940

My Dear Conran Smith
The most important political event of the week was the reshuffling of the ministry due to the intervention of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad. So far the only result has been the resignation of Mr. G. M. Sayed, a Moslem Leaguer, and his replacement by the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Allah Bux. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Allah Bux belongs to the Azad Muslim party.

Yours sincerely
C.B.B. Clee

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Government House, Karachi
12th December 1940

> Here with my commentary on the fortnightly report of my Government for the second half of November. References to paragraphs are to paragraph in the report.
>
> I rather think that the Maulana is claiming to have achieved more than he actually did. Two of my Muslim League ministers and also by the premier along had suggested the return of Allah Bux to me before the Maulana came here, and at the request of the premier I had discussed the matter with Allah Bux. He, however said, quite firmly that he declined to join any ministry in which he would have to serve under the Mir; actually than it seems that the extent of the success of the Maulana is that Allah Bux has accepted a place in the Ministry under the Mir. But Mir has given an undertaking that he will vacate the post of premier before the next budget session. I do not really know who is responsible for obtaining this acquiescence on the part of Mir, but I have never concealed from him my own frank opinion that he is entirely unfit for the ministry.
>
> L. Graham

This arrangement was a hope for the masses and they were of the view that through this unity the province would be safe in the absence of a second sectarian wave. But the groups and people that sought after their petty interests only made hindrances against such progress. In the words of G. M. Sayed:

> This committee began its work in right earnest. It had several meetings, wherein all the bills meant for the November sessions of the Assembly were thoroughly discussed and approved with necessary modifications. This resulted in their quick disposal by the house, without unnecessary waste of time. An important bill like the shop assistants bill, which otherwise would have taken weeks and months was passed within few hours. One great advantage accruing out of the formation of this committee was that it considerably expedited and simplified the work of the Assembly. It also contributed considerably towards

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the improvement of the existing stalemate, cause by party intrigues.

> But it is regrettable to record that there were some elements that did not take kindly to this new arrangement. They, by their very nature and by the particular interests they represented, could not persuade themselves to tolerate much less appreciate and welcome such a harmonising and revitalising agency in our legislative politics. Their interest based on exploitation were safe only when every thing else as around them was thrown into turmoil and confusion.

The groups who were against this pact tried to sabotage it, especially the all-India parties. The mouthpiece of the Congress, The Daily Gazette, claimed a clandestine deal between Allah Bux Soomro and G.M. Sayed, alleging that this secret pact would go against their desires. Although he had resigned from the ministry for the sake of unity of assembly members, instead of appreciating this move, it was falsely propagated that the resignation of G. M. Sayed was a blow for the Muslim League.

Jinnah came to Karachi on 16th December 1940 and the Hindu press expressed fears that his visit would culminate in the breaking of the Azad Pact.

Jinnah accepted the new ministry with some reservations and his condition was that the League should have an effective voice in the ministry.

This condition was improper and had no *locus standi* because this was the coalition government of various groups. G. M. Sayed, who had played a vital role in making the agreements, tried to save it; he took Allah Bux Soomro to Jinnah for further discussions. But they did not agree with each other. Jinnah wanted Allah Bux Soomro to be responsible to the League. However, Soomro refrained from accepting such responsibility or making any commitment. Jinnah in the context of that conversation between him and Allah Bux Soomro was of the view that the Muslim League should leave the coalition ministry.

Here is a report by the Governor to the Viceroy on the political scenario of Sindh.

Dear Lord Linlithgow 18th December 1940

I saw Jinnah in the evening and I think we had a frank conversation. He agreed with me that the Muslim League representatives in my ministry were thoroughly unsatisfactory and complained that the Muslim League had no voice in the settlement of policy because I had also two Muslim non-Muslim Leaguers in the ministry, in addition to two Hindus, he said that I could only get a stable ministry by dissolving the present Assembly. I pointed that I was not in a position to dissolve on the situation or (situation before me). Unless it came to a head and my ministers resigned and even then I should be very to dissolve because I did not think the programme would allow of an election being completed and a ministry being constituted and getting into working order before the beginning of the budget session. I don't wish for the third year in succession to have crisis during the budget session. Jinnah said that the provincial branch of the Muslim League, which according to him, is entirely disgusted with the manner in which, three of my ministers professing to be Muslim Leaguers negotiated with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, with the result that one of them resigned (G. M. Sayed) in favour of Allah Bux, who, as a prominent member of the Azad party, is entirely despised and hated by Jinnah.

Yours sincerely
Graham

Mir Bandeh Ali Khan, the then premier, in the light of Jinnah's opinion and wish that the Muslim League should have effective voice, role and proper share in the ministry, thought that this was a golden opportunity for saving the premiership under the shelter of the Muslim League and so he joined the League.

This new situation provided the Congress and other Hindus of the other group an opportunity to tell Allah Bux

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they had no choice except to break the ministry and install him as the new premier. They clamoured for Soomro as a prime ministerial candidate following the resignation of Mir Bandeh Ali Khan. The League high command demanded that either the premiership or half of the ministers should belong to the League. This atmosphere of distrust and insecurity of interest further deteriorated the situation which did not improve till the fall of the Mir ministry.

In January 1941 Allah Bux Soomro and Nihchaldas went to Sann in Dadu district to consult G. M. Sayed, and requested him that as the architect of this coalition ministry, continuation of the agreement was his moral duty. They also reminded him that Allah Bux Soomro under his plan of unity among members of parliament accepted the agreement and a junior place in the ministry. Sayed in his reply told them that he had already persuaded the leadership of the Muslim League about this sensitive issue. Sayed also showed his correspondence to both of them, which he had already carried out with the leadership of the Muslim League.

The League did not pay attention to the advice of G. M. Sayed. Its attitude was only lukewarm. G. M. Sayed felt that he had done his moral duty and he left both parties to do what they further wanted.

One month later came the budget session of the Sindh Legislative Assembly and on a cut motion of the Congress party, Allah Bux Soomro and two other Hindu ministers left the ministerial benches and when Mir Bandeh Ali Khan saw that he had lost the majority, he offered his resignation.

Soon after the fall of the ministry Allah Bux Soomro was sworn in as premier of Sindh.

The following letter relates to the then existing situation.

Home Department Sindh
21st March 1941

My dear Conran Smith,
The no-confidence motion, which was tabled against the old ministry, did not come up for discussion as three of ministers, the Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Allah Bux, the Hon'ble Mr. Nihchaldas Vazirani and the Hon'ble Raisahib Gokaldas Mewaldas, tendered their resignation, thus precipitating the resignation of the three Muslim League ministers. A new ministry has been formed with the Hon'ble Mr. Nihchaldas C. Vazirani, the Hon'ble Sir Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah, the Hon'ble Raisahib Gokaldas Mewaldas and the Hon'ble Pir Illahi Bux Nawaz Ali as ministers. Another Muslim minister is to be appointed but the choice has not yet been made. The Muslim League bitterly resented this change of ministers and the League convened a meeting on the 6th instant at the Khaliqdina Hall under the presidentship of Sir Abdullah Haroon. It was attended by two ex-ministers, Shaikh Abdul Majid and G. M. Sayed and some excited speeches were made. One speaker compared the Hindus to the Jews of Germany and remarked that a similar fate awaited them. An inquiry against him is under contemplation.

Yours sincerely
C.B.B. Clee

Instead of accepting the suggestions of G. M. Sayed, which he made verbally and through correspondence with Sir Abdullah Haroon, Mohammed Ayub Khuhro and the other leadership of Muslim League, they supported Mir Bandeh Ali Khan and his ministry. However all their efforts proved futile, because the ministry of Mir Bandeh Ali was short-lived.

The factual position, however, was that the League's political fortunes had taken a tumble and its morale had slipped. The first signs of party disarray made itself apparent in parliament where League members shattered the unity of the House. Antagonistic posturing was witnessed in parliament. The hitherto smooth work,

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performed by parliamentary committees, was halted for an indefinite period. Thus, the expectation that the parliament would do something better also died.

Two unsuccessful attempts were made first in 1938 and the second towards the end of 1940 at forging understanding between Jinnah and Allah Bux. Causes of the failure at reconciliation are as varied as they are disputed.

In my view all parties and individual leaders had their own programme regarding the communal question.

The second major difference between Allah Bux and central command of the Muslim League regarding the extent of control of the party over its provincial interests, the high command of the Muslim League were of the opinion that the provincial matters in which the Muslim League could possibly play a role should be completely subordinate to Jinnah, whereas Allah Bux Soomro felt otherwise.

A similar situation arose five years later in 1945 when G.M. Sayed wanted provincial matters to be decided by the provincial leaders alone. The centre declined his request and left him no choice but to accept its tutelage or to resign from the Muslim League.

The Muslim League and the ruling parties that succeeded it, like the centre-minded parties, are of the same opinion. They contend that since they lost a major federating unit, Bengal, in 1971 a strong centre would always be a guarantor of the sovereignty and integrity of the state.

Soomro's opinion was different from the Muslim League or any other party, as is evident from his statement of October 1942.

In October 1942 the president (Allah Bux Soomro) announced that the Azad Muslims had produced a constitutional plan. "Envisaging linguistic provinces with the right of self-determination to the point of secession but in the context of Indian freedom (Allah Bux Soomro at a press conference, New Delhi 7 October 1942 as reported in Tribune Lahore, 10 October 1942)

Further on W.C. narrated on the same page that their emphasis was still on the positive programme of mobilisation of the people behind the nationalist demand. They called for a Congress-League agreement for a nationalist independent government.

In the light of that situation to understand the opinion of Allah Bux Soomro, a conversation between G. M. Sayed and Allah Bux Soomro provides useful insight.

In reply to G. M. Sayed's question regarding his differences with Jinnah, he said that he was thinking that Jinnah's programme of the two - nation theory or Muslims are separate nation was un-Islamic, archaic and against all modern principles of nationalism. Also, G. M. Sayed wanted to know whether he felt positively about a Congress-Muslim League agreement, he said the Congress and Muslim League were both since all-India parties, and joining them would be harmful. The Sindhis had attained separation with great difficulty; now they should not do anything, which ended Sindh's autonomy. The following conversation will give the reader an idea of thinking of the two leaders: G.M. Sayed you are thinking that Sindh would get rid of the problems which it is facing now by the implementation of the two-nation theory is wrong and removed from realities. If you read the presidential address delivered by Dr. Sheikh Muhammed Iqbal at Allahabad session of the Muslim League in 1930 with any degree of care, you will discover that he wanted to end Sindh's freedom and make it subservient to the Punjab. At present the Hindu trader and money lender's plunder is worrying you but later you will have to face the Punjabi bureaucracy and soldiery and the mind of U.P.
G. M. Sayed, you live in a dream world about the 1940 ,resolution that is why you are ignorant of the

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practicalities of politics. In practical politics, there is a little room for promises, resolutions and principles. Read history and you will find that religious edicts, individual and group interest and local situations, requirements and considerations.

Although both these great sons of Sindh are not alive but their conversation, as related above, has a lesson to offer.

As the main architect of the 1940 Resolution of Lahore, G.M. Sayed, tabled the resolution of Pakistan on 3rd March 1943 in the Assembly of Sindh, and due to his efforts the Assembly passed the resolution and at that moment he delivered a marvellous speech, which capped a golden part of the freedom movement. But the actual position explained to him by Allah Bux Soomro about the 1940 resolution, that in practical politics, there was little room for promises, resolutions and principles, became clear within a few years. Sayed got his first shock when the central Muslim League had decided to expand the powers of the central body and minimise the powers of provincial bodies. His protests were ignored and eventually he parted ways with the Muslim League and made a struggle against the centralisation of powers up to his last breath as a prisoner of state.

Jinnah and the Muslim League had produced a new resolution on 9th April 1946 at Delhi in the convention of elected members of Legislative Assembly and it was unanimously passed by the convention.

The brief texts of both resolutions are as under:

27th annual session of all-India Muslim League held at Lahore on 22nd, 23rd and 24th March 1940.

That the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States'

in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign.

League Legislators Convention, Delhi, April 1946.

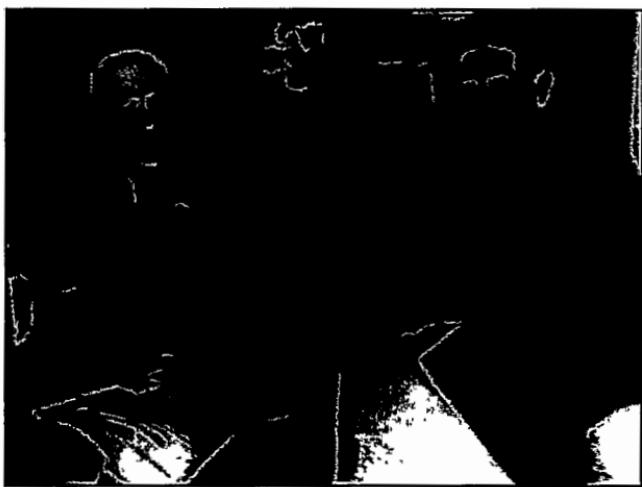
That the zones comprising Bengal and Assam in the North-East and the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh and Balochistan are in dominant majority, be constituted in to a Sovereign Independent State, and that an equivocal undertaking be given to implement the establishment of Pakistan without delay.

This action of Jinnah and the Muslim League gave rise to two key questions.

1. In the presence of 1940 resolution, why did Jinnah and the Muslim League pass the 1946 resolution?
2. People elected these members and voted for Muslim League according to the spirit of the 1940 resolution. Did they have the moral and legal right to change it? Shouldn't they seek re-election on the basis of the 1946 resolution?

Future history will be the best judge about the impacts, as well as the merits and demerits of both resolutions.

Valiant efforts were made by Allah Bux Soomro to keep the ghost of communalism from haunting the land.

As illustrated by Hugh Dow's letter to the viceroy, Allah Bux Soomro was caught in between fractious League leaders and the foundation of unending communalism. His political astuteness and single-minded pursuit of unity is evident.

L'eft: Abul Kalam Azad and Allah Bux Soomro

Allah Bux Soomro and Maulana Ubedullah Sindhi

Viceroy Lord Linlithgow, Allah Bux Soomro and other members of War Defence Council

Allah Bux Soomro

Premier again

Allah Bux Soomro was sworn in as a premier of Sindh, for the second time on 7th of March 1941.

In his first attempt his ministry tabled a 'Jagirdar bill' to give relief to peasants working on feudal-owned lands but it was opposed by the Muslim League on the insistence of its feudal-minded legislators like the Talpurs, the last rulers of Sindh, whose leader was ex-premier Mir Bandeh Ali Talpur. Only G.M. Sayed opposed the party's decision, and instead he supported the bill and made a poignant speech in parliament in favour of the proposed legislation. The assembly passed the bill after heated debate with 24 members voting in favour and 10 against the bill.

His response to emergencies such as the flood of 1942 was swift as it was far-reaching. He supervised the flood relief operations in upper Sindh and forever won the hearts of farmers and other flood victims.

He spearheaded along with others the campaign to counter the policy of the British whose aim it was to divide and rule. He tried to defuse the ugly situation created by communalism.

Allah Bux Soomro went to Lahore and there he exchanged views with Sir Sikander Hayat about the sectarian issue.

The following is a report by the Governor to the Viceroy.

Government House Karachi
23rd July 1941

Dear Lord Linlithgow
I had a talk with my premier on his return from his discussions with Sir Sikander Hayat Khan at Lahore on the 6th instant. From him I gathered that Sikander,

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through his own membership of the Muslim League and his personal influence with many of its leading members in the Punjab, is confident that communal relations in the Punjab districts have improved to such an extent that communal outbreaks need not be feared if the war situation should develop to a real crisis, Sikander has managed to get members of the Muslim League and Congress working committee together on his unity committees, according to Allah Bux, the intransigence of the Muslim League Sindh came as a surprise to Sikander who was inclined to take a serious view of it.

Undoubtedly All Bux is handicapped in this matter by the fact that he is outside the League, with which his differences are probably irreconcilable as long as Jinnah remains in control.

Yours sincerely
Hugh Dow

Regarding this sensitive issue the Governor has further emphasised in the same report as under:

I think Allah Bux has come back with the feeling that he may have to take strong measures against individual members of the League if they persist in their rightly communal propaganda and if they continue to pour scorn on the "Unity Movement", which has now with the passing of a grant by the legislative assembly for the purpose been definitely adopted as a government policy. I see no reason why I should attempt to dissuade him from this conclusion and in view of the possibility of this having to be translated into actions you might like to have my estimate of the character and position of the Muslim League in Sindh. There are only half a dozen of them who are prominent enough for action against them to make even a ripple outside the province. They are Sir Haji Abdullah Haroon, M.L.A., G.M. Sayed, K. B. Khuhro and Abdul Majid all of whom are ex-ministers, M. H. Gazdar, Mayor of Karachi and Mir Bandeh Ali Khan, ex-premier. Of these I regard only G. M. Sayed as a potentially dangerous man. He is at the same time fanatical and shrewd and has courage. He is the only one whom I apprehend it might become necessary to place under restraint; he is the real leader of the movement in Sindh. The nominal leader is Haroon, who is also a fanatic and he is influential because of his wealth and position. But he is an arrant coward and would come to heel the moment

he realised that Government meant business and were prepared to take repressive action. Abdul Majid whose father's name is Lilaram is capable of the usual excesses of the convert but is not likely to give way to them in these purely political maneuvers, Khuhro is a dishonest rascal and careerist, but I can't imagine him making sacrifices for any cause. When Manzilagah agitation which he had fermented reached danger point, he was only too willing to accept the advice to withdraw himself; Gazdar would, for perhaps the first time in his dingy career, think it advisable to honour one of his own undertakings, and would refrain from undesirable political activities on the score of his mayoralty. There remains the ex-premier, Mir Bandeh Ali Khan whose connection with the League may be regarded as purely temporary. He has so far let down every one of his political associates who was ill-advised enough to accept his word as a "gentleman" and the only thing which he can now be trusted is to do again.

H. Dow

The Hur Movement

Spiritual mentor Sayed Rashid Shah Lakyari Kazmi has numerous disciples in Sindh, Gujrat and Rajasthan. The militant groups of followers are called the Hurs (the sacrificers). For the independent status of the Sindh, the Hurs launched a guerilla war against the British Raj in 1880s and their struggle continued till the independence of the subcontinent. The British Government pressurised their mentor Sayed Hizubullah Shah Pir Pagaro to order the surrender of the insurgents but Pir refused. In reaction the British administration victimised the Pir, the courageous Pir faced all sufferings bravely and he stood firm on his word. Sir Hugh Dow as a young officer was engaged to smash the Hur rebellion during his service in Sindh, after four decades in mid June 1941 Sir Lancelot Graham was replaced by Sir Hugh Dow as governor of Sind. He made up his mind to take action against the Hur brotherhood. The brave, brilliant and shrewd Sayed Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro was the leader of the Hur brotherhood.

Former bureaucrat and egotistical Sir Hugh Dow bypassed the democratic norms and did not even bother to discuss Hur affairs and the arrest of Sayed Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro with the elected premier of the province; Allah Bux Soomro, and in a haste Sir Hugh Dow issued the order of the arrest of Sayed Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro. On 24 October 1941 police officer Ray arrested Pir Pagaro. Dr. Hamida Khuhro has mentioned the arrest of Pir Pagaro in her book 'Muhammad Ayub Khuhro' in these words.

> Hugh Dow had come in as governor. He was much sharper than Graham, a die-hard bureaucrat and very arrogant. He sent for the Pir in July 1941 and asked him to live in Karachi and not in the jungle. Pagaro agreed and came and stayed in Mir Khuda Bakhsh's bungalow on Bunder Road. He was there for sometime and then in October he suddenly left Karachi without informing the authorities, in this case Charles Clee, the collector of Karachi. This move infuriated the Governor. At the same time the Hurs were committing dacoities and murders in Khairpur and Sanghar on a somewhat larger scale than

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usual. The Pir took the opportunity to visit his Garang bungalow in Sanjhoro as well as Pir-jo-Goth. The Governor ordered Pagaro to be arrested and brought to Karachi. Sidney Ridley, the collector of Sukkur and the superintendent of police, went to Pir-jo-Goth and asked the Pir to accompany them. At what stage they did not tell him that he was under arrest. He was brought to Khairpur and had lunch with Ejaz Ali, the *Vizier* of Khairpur. Afterwards he was brought to Karachi. The Pir was arrested at Karachi on 24th October [Under Regulation XXV of 1827] and taken by train to Lahore and then by central Indian Railway to central India and to Seoni Jail in Nagpur, as we learnt later, Hur action started immediately after the arrest of the Pir.

The Sindh government was not happy with the actions of the governor--who was increasingly seen as a civil martial law administrator, for his lust for power knew no bounds. Under special powers, he undermined the status of the parliament. The premier of Sindh Allah Bux Soomro and several parliamentarians openly disagreed with him. In a statement of 19 December 1941 Allah Bux Soomro had showed his resentment.

Special Power for Governor.

19 December: An important statement concerning the constitutional implications of the exercise of special powers by the governor in the day-to-day administration of government was made by the premier, Khan Bahadur Allah Bux today.

After recalling the controversy that preceded the acceptance .of ministry by the Congress and the viceroy's assurance with the full approval .of the British government in regard to the exercise .of individual judgement by Governors, Khan Bahadur Allah Bux disclosed that before the arrival of the present governor and when he last assumed the reins of office as Premier, the attitude .of the former governor in regard to the exercise of the special powers was that, as far as possible, he did not desire whatsoever to interfere with the administration of the province. But the present governor interpreted the exercise .of these powers in a different way.

"He feels that in all matters where under the Act he has to exercise individual judgement and in all matters wherein he has special

responsibility he must exercise his .own judgement, as also in all matters where he may hold an opinion different from that .of ministers whether the matter be so important and the ministers' advice so perverse that his being guided by the ministers' advice would be inconsistent with the exercise .of his special responsibility or whether it is a mere matter .of difference of opinion regarding certain day-to-day administration. His Excellency does not seem to appreciate that even in matters wherein His Excellency has special responsibility; the primary responsibility is that .of the Ministers.

"The Premier added that the Governor had even gone so far as to say that in the provinces where the Governors abstained from the exercising those powers, it had been done not in accordance either with the instructions or the policy of the British Government as such. If the present policy of the Governor was approved by the Viceroy and the British Cabinet, then it raised a constitutional issue. The House would agree with him that so far as the Ministers were concerned, they were responsible to the Legislature and they owed no responsibility to anyone else and so far as the Governor was concerned, his position was that he owed responsibility to the Secretary .of State.

The Premier declared that in view of the stand taken by the Governor there could be no question of give and take "If the attitude which the present Governor has taken, namely, that irrespective .of the issue, whether major or minor, he must exercise his individual judgement, then I think there will be a regular list to be prepared .of all instances wherein interests would clash." The Premier added: "It means that it is a question .of measuring strength between the Governor representing the British Government .on .one side and the people .on the other. It will be impossible to assume for a moment that in the Congress provinces, with the advice .on various matters wherein the individual responsibility .of His Excellency was involved, there should have arisen no occasion or instance where the Governor had not differed from his Ministers, but it seems there they had to surrender and surrender not on merits but because of the power of the political party in those provinces. Now it clearly proves that the British Government is not prepared to part with powers. They wish to retain them as far as possible."

The Premier continued that the House could legitimately ask why the Ministers were continued to be in office under these humiliating conditions. He said that when he went to Delhi last time, he took up this question with the Viceroy, complaining against the exercise .of special powers. Under the public declaration .of the Viceroy, it was made clear that where Ministers were free to disclose the correspondence which had been carried .on between the Governor and the Ministers. Therefore, when he came back, he wanted to bring all instances before the House but it had been suggested to him by the

Governor that, in the first instance, it would be desirable that case of disagreement might be sent to the Secretary of State and they should await his decision. The Premier declared: "Although it has been suggested to me, I personally feel that it is no use our resigning in a huff. Let us wait and since this offer had been made by the Viceroy, let us get some more information and have a clear-cut answer from the British Government to find out what their attitude is going to be. Then the House will be taken into confidence and apprised of all those instances which had taken place so far and then they should decide on merits whether the advice tendered by the Ministers was a right one, or whether the decision arrived at by the Governor was in the interests of this country or not. He concluded, "personally, we the Ministers have not yet come to a final conclusion but we are inclined to send those instances to the Secretary of the State."

Pir Pagaro's arrest incensed his followers who go by the honorific of Hurs, and they challenged his detention through violent protests across the province.

G. M. Sayed narrated the Hur movement story as under:

All this while martial law was enforced on both sides of the Indus with great severity. I had plans to challenge the imposition of military rule in a court of law but Mr. Jinnah directed as sternly not to do so. Military rule had a negative impact both on the Hur uprising and the Quit India Movement in Sindh. Therefore I deem it necessary to throw some light on the events of the time.

The Hurs had been simmering with discontent for quite some time but their struggle caught the limelight when the British arrested their spiritual leader Sayed Sibghatullh Shah Rashdi. The arrest forced the Hurs into taking the law into their own hands and resorting to violent struggle against British Imperialism. There is no documentary evidence on the real objectives of the Hur struggle. But one thing is clear. When I met Pir before his arrest, I became convinced that he was totally opposed to communalism and regarded the Muslim League as dangerous to Muslim interest. Also, he wanted an end to British rule over Sindh. In this regard, he thought that a struggle should be launched in collaboration with all the revolutionary forces in the rest of India.

The measures, adopted by Allah Bux Soomro to

The Case of Sindh P.37

preserve law and order in Sindh were not to the liking of the Hurs. Their thinking was that though Pir Pagaro supported Allah Bux Soomro to become premier for a second time, he did not save Pir Pagaro from arrest. May be their charge against Allah Bux Soomro carried some weight but reality was different.

As a man of vision, he took some measures to save the province from the ruthless actions of the British administration and he was justified as the later actions showed the reality of his vision. The British administration imposed martial law in some parts of Sindh. They established constraint camps for Hurs and their families, arrest of any respectable person under the martial law orders were the business of daily routine and bombardment on Pir Pagaro's house was a glaring example.

During the Hur movement, Allah Bux Soomro was premier of Sindh for a short period of 11 months. Also, the Muslim League was in power from the end of 1942 to the day of independence; it did nothing to reduce the severity of the British rule in the province.

In this whole business the Muslim League carried out a negative propaganda against Allah Bux Soomro and maintained that it was he who was mainly responsible for the sorry predicament of the Pir and the Hurs in general.

Here is a report by the Governor to the Viceroy.

Home Department
Government of Sindh
21 September 1942

Dear Lord Linlithgow
I learn that the local branch of the Muslim League, who from last February were demanding martial law and hailed its imposition with delight are now likely to lead agitation for its removal. This is not, of course because the Hurs have been suppressed, but rather because the less reputable connections of leading members of their own party, and particularly those of G.M Sayed and K.B Khuhro are coming under too close scrutiny by the

L/P&J/5/258

martial law authorities the agitation may be dangerous, because there is some reason for thinking that many Muslim Leaguers who have been particularly opposed to the Pir's party are seeking to make their peace with the Hurs by directing the latter's crimes more exclusively against Hindus. Also, the Muslim Leaguers are quite unscrupulous in the methods by which they seek to discredit Allah Bux, and all the unpleasant results of martial law are put down to his account.

H. Dow

Chimes of Freedom

In 1942 when the freedom movement gained momentum in the form of the Quit India movement and other means adopted by the Congress, Allah Bux Soomro played a vital role in promoting the cause of freedom.

He attended several meetings and exchanged correspondence with the Viceroy, Cripps mission and leaders of the Congress.

A conference of the Azad Muslim Board was held in Delhi in March 1942 to discuss the political situation during which the board reiterated its stand that India should be given freedom forthwith.

Here is a cable by the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow to Amery about the Azad Muslim conference.

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr. Amery
L/P&J/8/509: F 45

NEW DELHI,
2 March 1942, 6.55 pm
Received: 2 March, 9.45 pm

39 D/42. Following is summary of Resolution passed by Board of so-called All India Azad Moslem Conference held in Delhi on Feb. 28th and March Ist, Khan Bahadur Allah Bux presiding. Amongst those reported present were Fazal Haq, Asaf Ali, Iftikharuddin, Nurie (Ex-Minister Bombay) and Ibrahim (Ex-Minister United Provinces).
India is no longer distant spectator of war but is within zone of imminent danger. To avert fate of those who have succumbed to aggression no effort should be spared to knit all people of India into United endeavour. Countries should be galvanised and its immense potential effectively developed for task of defending country and thereby establishing its freedom in world free of aggression. Board is convinced there is general unanimity in India that country must forthwith cease to be

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dependency if end is to be achieved and that it should have the freedom enjoyed by other free countries including England and Dominions. Representing nine constituent Moslem organisations and speaking for bulk of Indians, Board fully supports this demand. Specious plea of Secretary of State and British Government that Moslem League is Authoritative Spokesman Moslem and that its attitude and demands constitute insuperable obstacles in the way India's freedom is indefensible subterfuge to mask disinclination of British Government to part with power. Serious gravity of situation occasioned by menace of early invasion imperatively demands British Government should immediately recognise India's freedom and transfer real power enabling representatives of people to assume complete responsibility for defence of country as a whole in full and mutual collaboration with other free countries of the world.

Board also passed resolution observing that independence of nearly all Moslem countries has been held to ransom, conveying heartfelt sympathy to Moslem and the other inhabitants of the countries exposed to horrors of war, and hope that Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, and Persia will emerge from present plight strong and free in a world free of aggression and exploitation.

Another cable by Linlithgow to Mr. Amery on the conference.

"The All-India Azad (or Independent) Muslim Conference was first convened in April 1940 by Maulana Azad and other Congress leaders. In his address to the Conference Maulana Azad, who was at that time President of Congress, put forward proposals for overcoming the constitutional deadlock and challenged the Muslim League's claim to represent the Muslims of India. On 28 April 1940, the Conference passed a resolution which included a declaration beginning: 'India with its geographical and political boundaries, is an indivisible whole and as such it is the common homeland of all citizens, irrespective of race or religion, who are joint owners of its resources."

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr. Amery
MSS. EUR. F. 125/22

IMPORTANT

NEW DELHI,
7 March 1942, 8.40 pm
Received: 7 March, 9.45 pm

No. 557-G. Reference your telegram No. 4017 dated 4th March. All-India Azad Muslim Conference. Full description of genesis of Conference and Board will be found in Director of Intelligence Bureau's Weekly Report No. 17 of 1940. See also paragraph 17, Quarterly Survey No. II,[2] and Weekly Reports Nos. 18 , 27 and 29 of 1940. Board has never sat between July 1940 and recent session and organisation has been in abeyance. This session was stage-managed by Asaf Ali, who drafted resolution and arranged Press publicity. "Nine constituents Muslim organisation" mentioned in resolution couldn't all be identified.

But may include Ahrars,[3] Jamiat-ul-Ulema,[4] extremist Shias,[5] a section of Momins,[6] Ittihad-i-Millat,[7] and Red Shirts.[8] None of these bodies is important, and their combination would be artificial. Only influential non

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1. No. 235. See also No. 216.
2. For February-April 1940. 'Paragraph 17, should read 'paragraph 87' Neither the Weekly Reports nor the Quarterly Survey here referred to are printed.
3. Two Momin leaders are reported in today's Press to have cabled to you repudiating Jinnah's leadership of Momin (weaver) community. Press has published no account of alleged meeting of all-India Momin Conference. This body is quite uninfluential and many Momins are members of Muslim League.
4. Ahrars (lit. 'Free', 'free men') were among the most militant of the Nationalist Muslims who supported Congress and they strongly favoured Civil Disobedience. In 1940 approximately 5,000 persons were estimated to belong to Ahrar volunteer organisations, the main strength of which lay in the Punjab, the North-West Frontier Province and the United Provinces. See L/P&J/8/678.

Congress Muslims attending session was Fazal Haq and Allah Bakhsh.

Muslim League members so far as known have never been counted, and cannot be estimated with any accuracy. Distinction should be drawn between strength of League in Provincial Legislatures and outside.

(a) As regards former, League has had recent setback in Assam and Bengal. Of 117 Muslim seats in Bengal Assembly, Haq commands slightly more than half but his following is largely on personal grounds, and Bengal Muslim League's demand for a general election is significant. In Punjab of 84 Muslim seats not more than 12 at most are in opposition, and almost all remainder, following Sir Sikander's lukewarm lead, are members of Muslim League. In Sindh Parochialism and personal factions are even stronger than elsewhere; of 33 Muslim seats, about half support Allah Bakhsh, and about II are members of League.

(b) As regards latter, in Frontier Province, League has never counted for much. In Muslim minority provinces, support for Jinnah is strong. In Bengal and Punjab, support for League is at present probably stronger outside Legislature than within. In Assam and Sindh,

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5. Lit Association of learned men. During the course of his Presidential Address to the thirteenth session of the Jamiat-ul-Ulema Hind on 20 March 1942, Maulana Hussain Ahmed Madni advocated a federal solution to the Indian constitutional problem and argued that the Pakistan scheme would strengthen the hands of Imperialism.
6. The Shias were a minority among Indian Muslims, and fear of domination by the Sunni majority led some of them to oppose the Muslim League. But Shia opponents of the League could not be said to be fully representative of the Shia community as a whole. Several prominent Shias including Mr. Jinnah himself were Muslim Leaguers.
7. The All-India Momin Conference, with headquarters at Cawnpore, aimed at the social, political and economic advance of the Muslim weaving community (known as Momins).
8. The Ittihad i Millat (lit. Unity of the Community) also known as the Blue Shirt Volunteers was formed in 1935 by Maulana Zafar Ali Khan to work for the return of the Shahidganj Mosque at Lahore from Sikh to Muslim possession. In 1940, it was officially estimated to number 200. See L/P&J/7/886 and L/P&J/8/678.
9. See L/P&J/8/693.

whatever allegiance League can claim, no other Muslim organisation exists.

Here I quote yet another cable from Allah Bux Soomro and Fazal Haq to the prime minister for a demand of transfer of power.

Mr Turnbull to Mr Pinnell
L/P&J/8/509: f 58

INDIA OFFICE,
10 March 1942, 4.25 pm
Received: 11 March

308. Pinnell from Turnbull. Prime Minister has received following telegram from Fazal Haq, Khan Sahib and Allah Bux.

Most earnestly urge gravity situation occasioned by menace early invasion India imperatively demands immediate transfer India real power and recognition freedom enabling really representative Indian's establish representative government with full powers assume responsibility defence country in effective collaboration other free and democratic countries resist aggressors. This represents general view of Indian Musalmans also. If you see no objection grateful if you would acknowledge on behalf of Prime Minister.

Meanwhile the British Government had declared its version about India's future and had sent a mission under Sir Stafford Cripps to negotiate the possibility of freedom after the War to India. Allah Bux Soomro was an invitee.

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War cabinet paper W.P. (42) 115
L/PO/6/106 b: F 137

INDIA

NOTE BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS

II DOWNING STREET, S.W. I,
7 March 1942

I submit, on behalf of the Cabinet Committee on India, for the consideration of the War Cabinet, a further revised draft of a Declaration by His Majesty's Government regarding the future government of India.

C.R.A.

Annex to No. 265
DRAFT DECLARATION

His, Majesty's Government, having considered the anxieties expressed in this country and in India as to the fulfillment of the promises made in regard to the future of India, have decided to lay down in precise and clear terms the steps which they propose shall be taken for the earliest possible realization of self-government in India. The object is the creation of a new Indian Union which shall constitute a Dominion, associated with the United Kingdom and the other Dominions by a common allegiance to the Crown, but equal to them in every respect, in no way subordinate in any aspect of its domestic or external affairs.

His Majesty's Government therefore makes the following declaration:

(a) Immediately upon the cessation of hostilities, steps shall be taken to set up in India, in the manner described hereafter, an elected body charged with the task of framing a new Constitution for India.
(b) Provision shall be made, as set out below, for the participation of the Indian States in the Constitution-making body.

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(c) His Majesty's Government undertake to accept and implement forth with the Constitution so framed subject only to:

(i) The right of any Province of British India that is not prepared to accept the new Constitution to retain its present constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession if it so decides. With such non-acceding Provinces, should they so desire, His Majesty's Government will be prepared to agree upon new constitutional arrangements on lines analogous to those here laid down.

(ii) The signing of a Treaty, which shall be, negotiated between His Majesty's Government and the constitution-making body. This Treaty will cover all necessary matters arising out of the complete transfer of responsibility from British to Indian hands: it will make provision, in accordance with the undertakings given by His Majesty's Government, for the protection of racial and religious minorities: but will not impose any restriction on the power of the Indian Union to decide in the future its relationship to the other Member States of the British Commonwealth. Whether or not an Indian state elects to adhere to the Constitution, it will be necessary to negotiate a revision of its Treaty arrangements, so far as this may be required in the new situation.

(d) The constitution-making body shall be composed as follows, unless the leaders of Indian opinion in the principal communities agree upon some other form before the end of hostilities:

Immediately upon the result being known of the Provincial Elections, which will be necessary at the end of hostilities, the entire membership of the Lower Houses of the Provincial Legislatures shall, as a single electoral college, proceed to the election of the constitution-making body by the system of proportional representation. This new body shall be in number about one-tenth of the number of the Electoral College.

Indian states shall be invited to appoint representatives in the some pro-portion to their total population as in the case of the representatives of British India as a whole, and with the same powers as the British Indian members.

(e) While during the critical period which now faces India, and until the new Constitution can be framed, His Majesty's Government must inevitably bear the full responsibility for the defence of India, they desire and invite the immediate and effective participation of the leaders of the principal sections of the Indian people in the counsels of their country, of the Commonwealth and of the United Nations. Thus they will be enabled to give their active and constructive help in the discharge of a task, which is vital and essential for the future freedom of India.

Here is another cable by Amery to Linlithgow about the Cripps mission.

Amery to the Marquess of Linlithgow
MSS. EUR. F. 125/22

IMPORTANT

INDIA OFFICE
12 March 1942

PRIVATE AND PERSONAL

321. Superintendent Series Following is provisional outline of Cripps plans.

He expects to arrive Karachi by air about March 21st/March 22nd but will notify you later of precise date. He will be accompanied by Turnbull from this office and A. D. K. Owen and Graham Spry as Secretaries but will be grateful if you will make arrangements for confidential Secretariat assistance.

If agreeable to you, he would like to spend first two days or so with you and to have discussions with yourself, Commander-in-Chief, Governors, Members of Council and other official advisers whom you think he should see. He particularly desires to see Hallett, Glancy, Herbert and Lumley but doubts whether he need see other Governors

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except possibly Cunningham if he can come to Delhi.

Thereafter he would like to move to a private house and there begin conversations with Indian leaders. His intention is not to stay longer than about a fortnight unless it becomes clear that there is a definite prospect of doing business and on the basis of War Cabinet's policy. If conversations develop favourably he would probably have to stay longer. He does not however want to undertake a general tour of Provinces although he does not exclude possibility of visiting the more important if that became essential. He wishes to confine his conversations in Delhi at any rate in the first instance to a representative but restricted selection of people of real influence and following. On this subject he thinks that he should certainly see in the first instance those named in paragraph 4 and would be glad if you would advise them privately that they would be invited to see him and ask to hold them in readiness to come to Delhi between approximately March 26th and 5th April. He desires this because he is anxious that it should not be possible for any of them to say that they were precluded from seeing him through inability to travel to Delhi at short notice but it would clearly be best not to send out these invitations until as near the time as is consistent with this requirement. Cripps may suggest further additions to the list and would be glad of your advice as to whether you consider that there are any important omissions from it bearing in mind point of view represented by Members of your Council whom he will meet in any case.

Following is list: Congress Azad, Nehru, Rajagopalachari, Pant, Kher, Khan Sahib. Muslim League- Jinnah, Sikander, Nazim Uddin, Saadullah. Liberals-Sapru and Jayakar. Muslim non-League-Fazul Haq, Allah Bakhsh. Mahasabha-Savarkar. Depressed Classes- Ambedkar. Labour-Joshi. Sikhs one or two recommended by the Governor of the Punjab. States-Nawanagar, Bhopal, Bikaner, Kashmir, Chhatari and Krishnamachari.

He would probably also desire to see representatives of Europeans and Anglo-Indians but this can be arranged later.

Allah Bux Soomro issued a statement about Cripps mission. Here is a cable by Linlithgow to Amery.

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery
L/P&J/8/510 : f 637

NEW DELHI,
14 March 1942, 7.25 pm
Received: 14 March, 10.5 pm

48D/42. Following is summary of Press account statement made by Allah Bux in Sindh Legislative Assembly on 12th March (after stating case relating to constitutional difference between Ministry and Governor was under preparation [for?] forwarding to Secretary of State).

I exhort leaders of Political and Communal organisations to subordinate sectional differences in larger interest of the Motherland and co-operate with Cripps in shaping India's future constitution as equal partners in Commonwealth of free nations. Mr. Churchill's announcement will be cordially received by all men of goodwill as a constructive step towards the solution of India's longstanding constitutional problems. Decision to send Cripps kindles hope that vested interests and parties to disputes will alike give way to the voice of reason and that baffling problems will at last be handled in spirit of harmonious co-operation and mutual understanding. Personal discussions will afford effectual ways of resolving deadlock. Cripps has given numerous proofs of earnest desire to help India attain freedom; it is gratifying to note that he is coming not only as ambassador but as plenipotentiary vested with full powers to act on behalf of His Majesty's Government.

Although Soomro was an invitee but Sir Stafford Cripps and the viceroy hesitated to set a date for a meeting with him. Neither were the two British officials ready to

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disclose their reason for snubbing Soomro. One thing was quite clear, however, that bold steps had been taken by the Azad Muslim conference held in Delhi in March 1942 and the letter of Allah Bux Soomro and Fazal Haq to the viceroy provided sufficient reason to the British visitor. But through the insistence of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Soomro met with Cripps and discussed his plan regarding India's future freedom

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad narrated this story as under:

> We discussed these points in the light of the announcement made by the BBC on the occasion of the Cripps Mission. It had then been clearly stated that India would now have an opportunity to decide her own fate. This was also the note, which Cripps had struck during the first interview but as the negotiations continued, the early mood of confidence and optimism was gradually dissipated.
>
> There were other reasons also for a change in the mood and atmosphere. I have already said that before Sir Stafford came to India, he had asked the Viceroy to issue invitations to a number of political leaders of whom one was the late Mr. Allah Bux. After arriving in India, Cripps appeared to modify his stand, perhaps as a result of the influence of the Viceregal House. Allah Bux had come to Delhi on the Viceroy's invitation and was waiting for an interview with Sir Stafford but the interview was not being fixed. As this was creating an awkward situation, I spoke to Cripps and he said that he would soon invite Allah Bux. In spite of this promise, no invitation was actually issued. Allah Bux at last got disgusted and said he refused to wait in Delhi any longer. When I heard this, I spoke strongly to Sir Stafford and pointed out that this was an insult not only to Allah Bux but also to the strong body of Muslims whom he represented. If Cripps had any doubts on the point, Allah Bux should not have been invited at all. But since the invitation had been issued, he should be properly met. My intervention resulted in an interview between Sir Stafford and Allah Bux the next day. The interview was for only an hour and was confined

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to general discussions. Cripps did not touch the root of the problem.

This incident created a bad impression on me. I felt that this was not the proper method of dealing with difficult political issues. In my judgment, Cripps had not behaved like a statesman. The invitations should not have been issued without consulting the Government of India. Even if there were difficulties, he should have pointed them out to Allah Bux in a straightforward manner and not kept him cooling his heels in Delhi.

Linlithgow's cable to Cripps about his forthcoming meeting with Allah Bux Soomro and Fazal Haq.

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Sir S. Cripps (via H.M. Ambassador, Cairo) MSS. EUR. F. 125/130

MOST IMMEDIATE

18 March 1942

No. 691-S. Following for Sir Stafford Cripps. In paragraph 2 of my telegram.

No. 684-SI of 18th March, please add new item as follows:

(e) two non-League Muslims (Bengal and Sindh Premiers).

Sir H. Dow (Sindh) to Linlithgow about Allah Bux Soomro's press statement

Sir H. Dow (Sindh) to the Marquess of Linlithgow

MSS. EUR. F. 125/90

D.-o. No. 116/C. GOVT. HOUSE, KARACHI,
22 MARCH 1942

Dear Lord Linlithgow,
Within the Province of Sindh the reaction to the Prime

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Minister's message has been almost entirely favourable. My own Premier is very pleased about it, and the Hindu Press had welcomed it eagerly. The Muslim Leaguers are more reticent, but it has to be borne in mind that most people who call themselves Muslim Leaguers in Sindh know or care very little about the League's policy or affairs, and are actuated almost entirely by opposition to Allah Bakhsh and his Hindu supporters. There are hardly more than half a dozen Muslim Leaguers in Sindh who have any contacts with Leaguers outside the Province.

Yours sincerely
H. Dow

Dow to Linlithgow about Allah Bux Soomro's interview with Cripps.

Sir H. Dow (Sindh) to the Marquess of Linlithgow
(Extract)

MSS. EUR. F. 125/98

D. -o. No. 154/F.R.

GOVT . HOUSE, KARACHI,
25 April 1942

There is genuine disappointment that the Cripps Mission was unsuccessful. Allah Bakhsh, who had an interview with Sir Stafford, stated to me quite categorically that it was then made quite clear to him that in everything except Defence, the enlarged Council would be a real Cabinet, able to take majority decisions over which the Viceroy would have no veto. He asserts that near the end of the discussions, Sir Stafford went back on this: from which he deduces that this was on instructions from Whitehall. This is a view, which seems to be spreading in the Press, and if there is no foundation for it in fact it seems to me that it would be worthwhile to contradict it. But possibly the forthcoming debate in the House will clear up this question.

The British Government on Defence Council nominated Allah Bux Soomro as a war minister. Sir H. Dow Governor of Sindh to the Viceroy

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Lord Linlithgow about the activity of Soomro as member of the Defence Council.

Sir H. Dow (Sindh) to the Marquess of Linlithgow
(Extract)
M.S.S. EUR F. 125/98

GOVT. HOUSE KARACHI,
6 May 1942

D.-o. No. 164/F.R.
I agree that there is no marked change in the general attitude towards the war, but there are a few hopeful signs. Recruits are still coming in steadily for A.R.P. work in Karachi, and as more visible marks of their work appear, Press comment is more favourable. It is known that Government is not stinting funds for this work and have made considerable payments to the Karachi Municipality whose agency is being used. It is therefore not likely that attempts to raise volunteers outside the official organisation will be very successful so long as the money to keep them going has also to be raised privately.

The Premier is making a tour of the district by way of inaugurating the War Front, and according to the Press is holding successful meetings and making impassioned appeals for help in the war effort. But I am afraid he is still rather handicapped by his dependence on Congress support. He told me before he went that he had written to the Maulana asking for his sanction to Congressmen supporting the war effort, and particularly the A.R.P. and Civic Guards organisations, in Sindh, and he has since announced that the Maulana has agreed so long as these movements are placed under non-official guidance and control. That is not going to be particularly helpful, and Allah Bakhsh may be coquetting with the idea of putting a non-official committee, largely of Congress leaders, over the official organisation. Actually I have seen (intercepted by the C.I.D.) the Maulana's reply to Allah Bakhsh, of which the Maulana sent copies to Dr. Choithram Gidwani and Mr. R.K. Sidhwa, who are our two most irreconcilable

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Congress leaders. In this letter the Maulana's intention to sap the loyalty to Government of these two organisations is very clear. He says to Allah Bakhsh "You may form a non-official Central Board of seven, or at the most nine, members. This Board should have full powers to control the general policy and line of action of the A.R.P. organisation. The Minister in charge of Civil Defence can be the Chairman of this Board. So far as the technical side of the work is concerned the training of workers should be under the guidance of men appointed by the Government."

You will perhaps agree that this suggestion of using the Ministry to bring these organisations under what will practically be Congress control is as dangerous as the setting up of parallel organisations. I do not know how far Allah Bakhsh has fallen for the Maulana's plan, but I shall make it my business to have a serious talk with him as soon as he returns to Karachi. It seems to me that if Allah Bakhsh could be induced to come "all out" now as a War Minister, and take a strong line with Congress, he would be in an unassailable position: he would be supported by the vast bulk of the population and could afford to defy both the Congress and the Muslim League, neither of whom are in a position to form an alternative Ministry. There is no reason why he should call a meeting of the Assembly for the next six or eight months, and those months are likely to be so critical that he need not look beyond that period. If he with the view expressed in the official report on the Province for the latter half of April, weathers them his position will be a very strong one; I am appending a copy of the Maulana's letter to this letter.

Enclosure to No. 30

CONGRESS PRESIDENT'S OFFICE,
19-ABALLYGUNGE
CIRCULAR ROAD, CALCUTTA,
24 April 1942

My dear Allah Bakhsh,
Excuse me I could not reply your letter earlier. I am very busy.

I write below the scheme of A.R.P., which I had under

consideration. You may discuss the details with Dr. Gidwani and Mr. R. K. Sidhwa.

The work is of such a nature that we cannot rely merely on paid workers. Only those can work under abnormal and dangerous circumstances that have learnt to risk their lives in a spirit of self-sacrifice. Such persons do not work for monetary gain, but for the high ideals of national service. Only the Congress can claim to have such persons under its banner. Despite many shortcomings the Congress is the only organisation, which has a long tradition of service and sacrifice to its credit; and has successfully passed through many ordeals. Unfortunately, owing to the attitude of the British Government it cannot defend India, but nevertheless it is ready to serve the country in danger resulting from the war. If you want to make the A.R.P organisation an active and effective body, it can only become so by full co-operation with the Congress.

The arrangement made by the Bengal Government proved quite useless in face of real danger, and the Government was forced to seek the cooperation of the Congress.

The Congress does not wish to do this work on party lines. She is prepared to work with other parties, provided they are prepared to work in a spirit of co-operation.
You may form a non-official Central Board of seven, or at the most nine, members. This Board should have full powers to control the general policy and line of action of the A.R.P. organisation. The Minister in charge of Civil Defence can be the Chairman of this Board.
So far as the technical side of the work is concerned the training of workers should be under the guidance of men appointed by the Government.
How the work will be carried on in the districts and cities under this Board? Two methods can be adopted.

(a) The work can be undertaken by the Municipalities and the above-named Provincial Board may supervise the work, or
(b) Non-official branches of this Board may be formed in the same manner as this Board is formed.

The former has been adopted in the North-West Frontier Province and I personally prefer it. From many points of view the work can be properly carried on only when the local Municipal Board undertakes to do it.

You have also mentioned the Civic Guards and other necessary measures. I cannot form an opinion about just at present unless some fundamental questions are clarified at first. In other Provinces the Civic Guards are considered to be a subordinate body of the local Police. If this very method is adopted in Sindh, then it is unnecessary to say to you that the Congress workers cannot work under the present Police Officers. And the fact is that the work will not go smoothly in this way. The Police Officers are so much away from the national spirit that no national worker can work under them.

I am prepared to concede to Sindh what I am not prepared to do in other Provinces, provided some practical plan of work is possible. I would have no objection if full co-operation is established between the Civic Guards and the Police under a joint Board of Control. But the organisation of Civic Guards should be formed on purely national lines, so that every Civic Guard may feel that he is a part of a national organisation and is working under the national command. Unless such a spirit is nourished, no effective organisation for Civil Defence is possible under the existing circumstances. Paid constables can work under the present Police Officers for the sake of money, a national servant will not do so for the service of the nation.

Yours sincerely
A-K- Azad

Following is a report on the Cripps mission.

War Cabinet Paper W.P. (42) 283
L/P&J/8/510 : ff 407-16
REPORT ON MISSION TO INDIA
MEMORANDUM BY THE
LORD PRIVY SEAL

6 July 1942

I think it is desirable for purposes of official record and

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for the assistance of any similar Mission to India in future should provide a detailed account of the discussions, which I had with Indian leaders during my recent visit to India.

The purpose of the Mission with which I was entrusted by the War Cabinet[2] was to ascertain, by personal consultation with the leaders of Indian opinion, whether the conclusions of His Majesty's Government embodied in the draft Declaration[3] would meet a sufficient measure of assent to enable it to be promulgated with reasonable assurance that this would promote the solidarity of Indian opinion and would result during the war in the co-operation of representative Indian leaders in the existing machinery of government. Two separate but inter-connected issues were therefore involved firstly, the acceptability or otherwise of the basic principles and the procedure proposed for the framing of the post-war Indian Constitution, and, secondly, the manner in which the immediate and effective participation of Indian leaders might be secured under the existing machinery of government during the war and pending the introduction of a new Indian Constitution. It was the intention of the War Cabinet that, if I succeeded in securing a sufficient general measure of assent in principle to the draft Declaration as a whole, the Governor-General should discuss with Indian leaders the precise manner in which their immediate participation in the existing forms of government should be given expression. In the event, however, Congress leaders were not prepared to commit themselves in regard to the Declaration without assurances in regard to the immediate future. From an early stage the discussions with them centred on paragraph (e), and, although opposition to individual provisions of the long-term proposals was expressed, it was upon this paragraph that the breakdown of the negotiations came.

With the object of broadening the scope of my contacts and of hearing provincial points of view without opening the door to all and sundry, I invited the Premiers of Provincial Government and the ex-premiers of the Provinces now administered under Section 93 to come and see me. Not all of these were able to accept, but I had

valuable discussions with Mr. Rajagopalachari and Sir Sikander Hayat Khan, with whom, as I was dealing primarily with Party organisations, I should otherwise have found it difficult to renew contact. I also saw Mr. Fazal Haq, Premier of Bengal, and. the Rajah of Parlakimedi, Premier of Orissa, Pandit Pant, Mr. Kher, Sir Muhammad Saadullah and Khan Bahadur Allah Baksh[7], ex-Premiers of the United Provinces, Bombay, Assam and Sindh, respectively, and Mr. Shukla, ex-Premier of the Central Provinces. I also invited Mr. Gandhi to come to Delhi to meet me, a step which was suggested to me by Lord Linlithgow. I should, in any case, have felt it essential to success, and was glad that the Viceroy felt no difficulty about it. In addition, I invited Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar to see me together, and at a late stage in the negotiations I received representatives of the National Liberal Federation and of the Andhras.

Allah Bux Soomro apprised the viceroy of his views about the Cripps mission through a letter.

Khan Bahadur Allah Bakhsh to the Marquess of Linlithgow.

MSS. EUR. F. 125/124

SIND SECRETARIAT, KARACHI,
31 August 1942

Dear Lord Linlithgow,

I feel it my duty to place before Your Excellency certain matters for consideration with a view to resolving the present political deadlock in India, which is deplored by all men of goodwill who cherish the welfare of this country as well as the great cause for which the United Nations are fighting in different theatres of war.

The people of India have always believed that the British Government had at no time any desire, nor have they even now, to part with power and to satisfy the legitimate aspirations of this country. The statements

1.The period of Cripps, Mission to India, 23 March-11 April 1942, is covered by Nos-367-610 in Vol. 1 See Chapter 4 (PP.XIV-1 vii) of the summary of document in Vol. 1 cross-reference to vol.3.1 have been given only for documents falling at side this period.

7. Khan Bahadur Allah Bux was in fact still premier of Sindh

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made from time to time by British spokesmen in authority, including those made by Sir Stafford Cripps, have, if anything, confirmed the belief that in no circumstances would Britain be prepared to give up her power in India, and that although they are waging the present War in defence of democracy, yet so far as India is concerned they wish to continue their imperialistic hold on that country as long as they can manage to do so. The proposals put forth by Sir Stafford Cripps have only strengthened this belief, and there can be no doubt that the present situation is a direct outcome of his visit, which has left nothing but bitterness against the British authorities in the heart of the Indian people.

The Indian nationalists in and outside the Congress who aspire to see the people of India rise to the full height of their political stature are fully convinced that the communal or political differences which have arisen in this country are merely the creation of British diplomacy, which has consistently aimed at holding back power for the purpose of exploiting India economically in the interests of the British people in general and of British capitalists in particular. According to them, the communal organisations have been recognised and encouraged with such an object in view, and that persons and parties who do not share their narrow outlook have been left unrecognised and discouraged so as to placate the world opinion in favour of the British policy and to use the communal differences so accentuated as an excuse for continuing the British hold over India. They find this clearly reflected in the one-sided character of the British propaganda conducted in America and other Allied countries.

The question which is asked in every quarter is: Is India to remain under subjugation for ever if a section of a particular community or a community as a whole does not come to reasonable settlement with the rest of the body-politic in their just demand for the freedom of their country? If such a proposition were accepted, it is felt that even after the war India will not become a free country. Nor has the British Government exerted itself at any stage to unite the various Indian communities by impressing upon them the supreme necessity from the national point of view of working together for the greatest good of their

country. If anything, it has tried to separate them to serve its own advantage.

I think I can state without fear of contradiction that there is no political organisation in this country, which believes that the British have ever seriously desired to free India. While there is a consensus of opinion throughout this country that the Allies are fighting in defence of a righteous cause, the attitude of the Indian leaders in regard to the Indian problem may be summed up in the views held by two divergent schools of thought. One school believe that the ideology upon which the action of the United Nations is based in carrying on the present momentous conflict is in conformity with the aspirations of the Indian people themselves, and that India on that very account should throw her whole weight into the war to ensure the victory of the beneficent cause for which it is being fought. They do not believe that India would automatically become free after the war without making further sacrifices. They believe that at the end of the present world conflict they will still have to fight for the attainment of their national freedom, but they consider that the universal cause should be helped first and the fight for the freedom of India resorted to afterwards. They also feel that the British Government will emerge from the titanic conflict far too exhausted to dictate their own terms to the people of this country, and it would then be easy for the latter to gain their national freedom. The other school of thought fear that after the war Britain would be so depleted of her material resources that she would use every means left to her to exploit the people of India economically.

As I have remarked, however, there is no doubt entertained by any section of Indian public opinion that the British have no intention to free India and that the approach to the Indian problem has all along been made in typical imperialistic fashion. In such a state of affairs the policy of repression will materially injure the cause for which the Allies are fighting. The policy is not likely to serve any fructuous end, and if it proves of any avail its success will be merely superficial. Repression will not kill the basic discontent of which the present movement is but a symptom; it will only drive that discontent under

ground. On the other hand, the repressive measures taken to deal with the present situation have drawn various sections of the people to the Congress fold, partly because their patriotism for India's national cause has been thereby aroused, and partly because they cannot bear the harsh treatment and suffering inflicted upon their own fellow countrymen. The greater the repression the greater will become the sacrifices, and the stronger will be the invitation to persons at present disconnected with the Congress to sympathise with that organisation. Apart from every other consideration, I am bound to say that the policy is fraught with tremendous harm to the cause of the Allies, as the Axis powers will make the fullest capital out of it for propaganda purposes. The inevitable disorder resulting from the policy will provide a ready opportunity to the Axis powers to invade this country, and the bitterness thereby created every day against the British people will strengthen such opportunity and create facilities for any attack which would not have otherwise been afforded them. Thus from every point of view it is the British Government which loses and the Allies who suffer by the adoption of such a policy.

Guided by these far-reaching considerations, I am earnestly of the opinion that it is not too late for the British Government to give a convincing proof of their sincere desire to part with power. I am earnestly convinced that such a proof can be conveyed by a declaration in unambiguous terms that immediately after the war India shall be free and have perfect liberty to frame her own Constitution, and that should any differences arise in safeguarding the interests of particular communities they shall be referred to the arbitration of an independent international tribunal, without the slightest interference of the British Government who are interested in the economic exploitation of India.

It may be argued that reopening the door for negotiation at this stage and coming to terms with Congress leaders would mar the prestige of the British Government. If such a view is upheld, it would further confirm the prevalent view that the British Government wishes to tighten her hold over India. Whose prestige would suffer: If the British Government have no desire to keep this country

under subjugation and there is to be no imperialistic hold over her people, then the question of imperialistic prestige does not arise, for there will be no imperialism whose prestige has to be thought of.

I have tried to express my mind frankly on the subject, for I feel that where the most vital interests of this country are at stake it would be a sacrilege and a disservice to the cause of human welfare to speak with reservation and give only such views as would please persons in authority. I would earnestly plead with you to move His Majesty's Government to make an unequivocal declaration of the nature I have suggested, and to open the door for negotiation by inviting the political leaders to resolve the present deadlock and support the vital cause for which the Allies are fighting. With the enemy at the very door of India, nothing can forward that great cause more effectively then by ensuring the willing and heartfelt co-operation of a free people in defence of their own rights in their own country.

Yours sincerely,

ALLAH BAKHSH

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Khan Bahadur Allah Bakhsh.

MSS. EUR. F. 125/124

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
8 September 1942

Dear Khan Bahadur Allah Bakhsh,
Thank you for your letter of the 31st August. I have read it with care and close attention, but I fear that many of the suggestions or much of the argument contained in it would not be possible for me to accept, although I appreciate your anxiety to see achieved a settlement fair to all parties and to the advantage of India. I fully accept also that it is your anxiety to see that object achieved that has led you to address me on a matter which falls outside the provincial field at a time when your thoughts and your

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energies must be devoted in so large a degree to coping with the difficult local situation in Sindh.

Yours sincerely
Linlithgow

Allah Bux Soomro suggested to British authorities to find a proper way to settle the differences with Indian National Congress but the colonial administration did not pay attention to Soomro's suggestion. Khan Abdul Wali Khan describes it in his book, 'Facts are Facts' as under:

It will be relevant to the Chief Minister of Sindh, Allah Bux Soomro. It has been mentioned that a convention of nationalists Muslims was held in New Delhi under Soomro's chairmanship. That had naturally infuriated the viceroy, since Soomro had nothing to do with Muslim League and was the elected member of the provincial Assembly. And by the token of his Chief Ministership of Sindh, he was also member of the Viceroy's Defence Council. Following the convention the Viceroy's attitude towards him became not just bitter, but insulting. So, once on the Viceroy's asking Soomro presented some suggestions to the Defence Council regarding ways of forestalling or resolving communal differences. He had also suggested that Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, then in prison, should be released. The Viceroy writes about what followed in a letter of October 11, 1941.

"When, "he said, "am I likely to hear from you? Have you decided?" I replied, "you will hear nothing. You are not of my advisers, But Prime Minister of Sindh... I have not the least intention of telling you how I propose to handle my business and I trust you understand that" He said, " you are very frank" I said, " I am bound to be frank. This is my business, my responsibility."

It does seem odd that while on the one hand the viceroy keeps consulting with Muslim League leaders on all political, constitutional and organisational issues, he does not, on the other, grant the Chief Minister of a province and member of his own Defence Council even the right to ask his opinion on certain proposals. Look at the arrogance in his tone. Obviously he wished to make it clear to Mr. Soomro that outside the Muslim League and the approval of Mr. Jinnah he was not prepared to accept the credentials of any Muslim.

be he the elected Chief Minister of a Muslim majority province or member of the Defence Council.

Facts are Facts P. 48

Since his efforts at rapprochement of the Congress and the British came to naught, in part by the intransigence of the colonialist power, Allah Bux rebuffed any reward that was thrown his way. His renunciation of the titles of Khan Bahadur and O.B.E. was only to be expected. He wrote a letter to the Viceroy, considered by many historians as an essential document of the freedom movement.

I wish to quote a letter written by the premier, which has been included by Jagat S. Bright in his book Allah Bux Soomro *India's Nationalist No.1* with comments regarding the merits of the letter and the personality of Allah Bux Soomro.

> Allah Bux was explosively agitated on September 11, 1942. The bluntest speech of Mr. Winston Churchill was flashed to India: The whole country was boiling with indignation. The Prime Minister of England declared that the Japanese Fifth Column was aiding the Indian National Congress. And that the Congress conspiracy was breaking down. Further he poured out his bitterest feelings. These had checked his mind since the Congress launched a "Quit India" programme and adopted "Do or die" policy in August last. Churchill delivered a set speech punctuated by cherry full stops. Here is an extract:
>
> The Indian Congress party does not represent all India. (Cheers). It does not represent the majority of people of India. (Cheers). It does not even represent the Hindu masses. (Cheers). It is a political organisation built around a party machine and sustained by certain manufacturing and financial interests. (Cheers and laughing). Mr. Churchill further declared: "Many martial races, divided by unbridgeable gulfs from Hindu Congress, will never consent to be ruled by it." It was also stated that a large number of British, Australian and American troops in India were ready to tackle any Congress move. Among the critics in parliament was Mr. Shinwell. He asked if the British reinforcements sent to India were to repel the

Japanese or to deal with civil disobedience. "Is this a part of the second front?" he enquired. No answer was given. But the question echoed across the Atlantic. And Washington took immediate action. Orders were issued to American troops in India. They should not burn their fingers in the civil oven.

The Speech of Mr. Churchill received a hot welcome in India. The whole nation glowed with anger. Passions ran high. Martial communities issued counter-statements. Sikhs stood up for patriotism. Even the Muslim Leaguers spoke out in agony. The speech ran iron into the nation's breast. Every leader, worth his salt, howled and growled.It was a challenge to India's self-respect. And every self-respecting Indian gave vent to his thought. Dr. Ambedkar, the hardened loyalist, took the premier to task, Even the Anglo-Indian papers, the strong arm of British rule in India, were not pleased. The Civil & Military Gazette hissed. The Times of India mewed. The statesman roared.

Allah Bux ached with sorrow. Sorrow and indignation, deep and high. He saw the British policy in its true colours. Naked as a dagger. Mr. Churchill banged the door in the face of patient, wait-a-little-longer loyalists. Sir Sapru, the bosom friend of Britain, dipped his pen in wrath. The conscience of India was strongly of the right. Masses were markedly left wing. The congress leaders, behind the bars, were mute with indignation. No protest came from Gandhiji. No spirited reply from Jawaharlal. But their soulful voices were nevertheless in the air. He found a lot of reasons against Mr. Churchill. But the reasons were patently his own.

Allah Bux was moody for days. Long he brooded on the future of India. Long he dwelt on the past of England. Present times swam before his eyes like airy vessels. He was a trifle bowed with the weight of state. His rosy hopes withered. The cloak of provincial autonomy was ragged. Dagger like bones was peeping out. While the ministers moved in a Rolls-Royce, the masses rolled in stinking filth.

September 26, 1942 is an important milestone in history. Khan Bahadur Allah Bux, O.B.E., wrote the following classic letter to the viceroy of India:

I beg to inform, Your Excellency, that I have decided to renounce both the honours I hold from the British Government, as I feel I can't, consistently with my views and convictions, retain them any longer.

India has been struggling for her national freedom for a long time past. Upon the outbreak of the present war, it was hoped that, under the very principles and ideology in defence of which, the Allies were waging a titanic conflict, India would be made free to participate in the world struggle as a free country.

Convinced as I am that India has every right to be free and that the people of India should have conditions in which they could live in peace and harmony, the declaration and action of British Government have made it clear that, instead of giving cooperation to various Indian parties and communities in settling their differences and parting with power to the people of the land and allowing them to live happily in freedom and mould the destinies of their country according to their birth right, the policy of the Briton Government has been to continue their imperialistic hold on India and persist in keeping her under subjection, use political and communal differences for propaganda purpose and crush the national forces to serve their own imperialistic aims and intentions.

The latest speech delivered by Mr. Winston Churchill in the House of Commons has caused the greatest disappointment to all men of goodwill who wish to see justice rendered to India - which is long due to her.

As that hapless pronouncement withholds such justice from India and adds to the volume of evidence that Britain has no desire to give up her imperialistic hold on India, I feel I cannot retain the honours I hold from the British Government which, in the circumstances that have arisen, I cannot but regard as tokens of British imperialism.

Having drafted this letter, Allah Bux was neither Khan Bahadur nor held the Order of British Empire. He sacrificed both the honours on the lofty altar of nationalism. And rightly did he so. For the Great Goddess of Democracy gives a cold shoulder to the titled gentry. She likes simple Johns and plain Jacks. Barons and baronets are not to her taste. It is better to be a Mr. So-

and-so than member of a rotten benighted family. True honour is earned. It cannot be bestowed. Comes through a struggle for truth and justice. Not by scrambling to kiss the knees of an enthroned personage.

The historic letter of Allah Bux brings out several points of note. It is a golden document, a living record of bad British statesmanship. In the first place, Britain has belied the hopes of the world. Fighting to free the caged doves of Germany, she is mightily unwilling to encage her own pigeons. Various arguments are cooked. But these are usually over-cooked. Even America does not relish the English mutton of facts and figures. Britain's attitude towards India is the touchstone of her sincerity. The world judges the British Parliament by the yardstick of its Indian policy.

Secondly, Allah Bux is firmly convinced that "India has every right to be free". Not even Britain can deny it. Even the die-hards take this for granted. Mr. Churchill himself labours to prove the right, although he would not grant it. Possession is nine-tenths of law. And the law is on the side of the British because the British have made it. India has the right but not the might. And we all know that the pen will not supersede the sword at any rate, not for a long time to come.

Thirdly, Allah Bux wants India to "live in peace and harmony." That medicine we need most badly. Britain has robbed us of harmony. The brightest jewel in the crown of Indian philosophy since the landing of the Europeans on our coasts, we have lost that inner something, which goes to make a man merry. We want neither food, nor freedom, nor loaf, nor liberty. But Britain, be good, give back our peace!

Fourthly, Allah Bux lays down that the British Government is not "giving their cooperation to various Indian parties and communities in settling their differences." The British are putting a spoke in the wheel of the Indian Union. Although Free India will be a bulwark to Japanese aggression, 'Divide and Rule' is still the working policy. Although; 'combine and rule' will do the British themselves, a lot of practical good. Religion is being used as a spearhead for political expression, a mask for keeping the dog from his due.

Fifthly, the British Government has no mind to "part with power." Promises are made. Which are hollow. Rosy

constitutions are held up. But insincerity in the background remains the perpetual thorn. Words are spoken. But these find no vent in actions. No power is being parted to the sons of the soil. Who are not allowed to mould the destinies of their country? Which indeed is their birthright.

Sixthly, Allah Bux states "the policy of the British Government has been to continue their imperialistic hold on India and persist in keeping her under subjection." Communal differences are used as a smoke-screen. National forces are being crushed. Imperialistic aims are served. Proper national unity is robbed. Political reforms are hocus-pocus. Soaring minds of the young flowering India crash to the ground like a spent-up rocket. The gulf of differences shall never be bridged. There are no rosy signs on the political horizon.

Seventhly, the latest speech of Mr. Winston Churchill "caused the greatest disappointment." Shocked all men of goodwill. It came to humble India like a thunderbolt from the blue. Last nail was driven into the coffin of democracy. Sir Stafford Cripps was only dangling a new constitution to buy off a Japanese attack. No doubt, Allah Bux looked upon all titles as tokens of British Imperialism.

Allah Bux, however, did not favour Axis. Frankly he told newspapermen "I believe in two things: defeating British Imperialism, at the same time resisting Nazism and Fascism. It is my birth-right to fight both." Further he stated, "I wish India should be free from the foreign yoke as well as resist foreign invasion." Asked whether he would take further steps to bring about a settlement, he simply said, "Wait and see." One journalist observed, "Hereafter you will be addressed as Premier Allah Bux." The Premier rejoined with a laugh, "I do not know how long my Premiership will last.

The Premiership of Allah Bux did not last long. His laughter was prophetic. He knew his foes too well. The powers of darkness were gathering pace. He saw the approach of the storm. Signs were already in the sky. He had achieved the zenith of political power. The highest point in the firmament of national glory. The present constitution offered no further point or prospect. Rising action was over. Crisis was approaching. Catastrophe was at hand. Mr. Allah Bux was paying the full price of patriotism. It was the hard cash of blood and iron. He had

taken to a mighty task. 'The task to resist a mighty empire.' Allah Bux must have counted the cost. He would have to pay dearly. He knew full well. And he was prepared for the worst. And the worst was not long in coming. Soon the storm broke. And the hail fell sharp and swift on his head.

On October 10, 1942, the following communiqué was issued from the Governor House at Karachi _"His Excellency the Governor of Sindh has discussed with Mr. Allah Bux on his recent renunciation of honours and the reasons of that renunciation given in his published letter. In the light of that discussion he had no option but to inform Mr. Allah Bux that he no longer possessed the Governor's confidence and that he cannot in consequence continue to hold office. Mr. Allah Bux was dismissed under Section 51 of the Government of India Act 1935, which reads "The Governor's Ministers shall be chosen and summoned by him, shall be sworn as members of the Council and shall hold office during his pleasure.

Mr. Allah Bux told a gathering of journalists, "My dismissal had no connection with any constitutional issue." He further stated, "There is no point in not recognising that under the constitution as it stands the Premier remains the Premier only if he has the confidence of the Governor and not merely if he has the confidence of the legislature." Asked if he had any further plans, the ex-Premier said, "Wait and See."

The dismissal of Mr. Allah Bux was front-paged in the newspapers all over India. The act of the Governor was held up to severe criticism. The Premier of Sindh was not the first Indian to give up honours. Others had set the example years before. And none of them was punished. Sir S. Subramanya Aiyar, Chief Justice of Madras High Court spurned his K.C.I.E. and returned the insignia as protest against the British attitude towards the Indian demand for home rule during the last Great War. Poet Rabindranath Tagore scarified his knighthood as a protest against the Punjab atrocities in 1919. The Immortal poet could not dangle his honours in the face of agony inflicted on a remote corner of his beloved country. He wrote a classic letter to Lord Chelmsford, the then Viceroy of India. Mahatama Gandhi returned his *Kaisar-i-Hind* Gold Medal to the Viceroy and many other nationalists followed suit. Then why was Mr. Allah Bux alone skinned for his patriotic boldness? He enjoyed the full confidence of the legislature. He was responsible to the

people. The Governor ought not to have taken him to the Silk Road of dismissals. No doubt, he is empowered mightily. But the use of power should be tempered in a country where the idea of democracy is to be nursed. "It is good to have a giant's strength, but," as Shakespeare puts it, it is tyrannous to use it like a giant." Raja Maheshwar Dayal Seth, General Secretary of the all India Hindu Mahasabha, issued the following statement to the press: _ "Another nail has been put into the coffin of democracy for which the allied nations are said to be fighting. What had the renunciation of titles to do with commanding a majority support in the Legislature is beyond my comprehension."

The Free Press Journal gave the following merry comment in its usual fairy style editorial: -

"Mr. Allah Bux, the former Prime Minister of Sindh, bore a title. He was a 'Khan Bahadur".

What that meant no one could definitely say.

Many are Khans without being Bahadurs and many are Bahadurs without being Khans.

But 'Khan Bahadurs are British made.

Mr. Allah Bux was a Khan Bahadur.

He renounced the title and the renunciation has cost him his job.

Mr. Allah Bux should have little cause to complain.
Under the Government of India Act 1935, Ministers hold office during the Governor's pleasure

Surely it could not have been a 'pleasure' for the Governor of Sindh to be advised by one with Mr. Allah Bux's views.

It would be considerably simpler to leave the pseudo-democracy in Sindh to the care of undertakers.

It awaits nothing but a decent burial.

Since the Congress moves of August 1942, the British Government has been tightening the reins of India. All hopes have crashed to the earth. Even the moderate sections in India have begun to grind their teeth. The

deadlocked will never be unlocked, it seems. There is little to be expected from the Churchill regime. The British Premier is a superlative craftsman. So is his lieutenant, Mr. Amery. Their teeth are set for Germany, and they do not mind sharpening their jaws and claws on a bite of India if it happens to fall across their headlong way. Mr. Allah Bux issued the following statement on the eve of his dismissal: "The statement of Mr. Amery in the Commons yesterday confirms the estimate which the Indian public and Indian leaders have already formed of Churchill, Amery & Co. Mr. Amery talks of the aims, which, he says, Britain solemnly pledged herself before the world. What is that Britain has pledged herself to inform the world? Has she pledged herself to anything definite at any definite period of time?"

Vagueness is the besetting sin of British attitude. Everybody wishes that John Bull were a bit thinker. Logic plays no part in English character. It is sheer drive that Mr. Churchill feeds on. He has nothing but sweat and tears. For England during war. For India even beyond the War. There is no hope that Mr. Churchill, Amery & Co. will ever give up the brightest jewel in the British crown. They have made up their mind not to preside over "the liquidation of the Empire." But is freedom of one-fifth of the human race an imperial liquidation? If so, it will be an act of grace. Worthy of the greatest statesmen. Every Englishman will welcome it. Free India will be a shoulder of strength to Britain. But Britain has not the courage to face facts. It does not trust his slave with the sword of independence. Even the history of U.S.A. is shelved. America won her day in a bloody battle. Unbleached herself from Britain. Can defy her. Yet she is the closest friend. How can India be ungrateful if freed without bloodshed? But Slave India is a bird in hand. And to a power-drunk politician, ten birds in the bush have no worth."

The following is a letter of the Governor to the Viceroy, which clearly spells out the attitude of these two men towards the premier of Sindh, in 1942.

Government House Karachi.
21st September 1942

A visit to Delhi usually goes to my premier's head and

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this time when, owing to vacancies, he has been able to occupy a larger share than usual of the political stage he has returned in an extremely difficult mood. When the local papers come out with headings "Allah Bux" answers Churchill" and talk of his "Classic Letter" to the Viceroy, he begins to think of himself as a world figure and is a little difficult to hold down to his job. It is a pity that his instability should neutralise many excellent qualities. He is finding it very difficult to make up his mind on which side to come down. I have kept you informed of the circumstances leading to his renunciation of his titles. At his last interview on the 19th, when he proposed to release his letter to you to the press some days before it would reach you, I was perhaps a little rough with him. I told him that this after all was a question of good manners which it was not part of my duty to teach him; asked him whether he thought this was such a world shattering event that the public could not be kept in ignorance for a few days, and also asked him whether it was not a reflection on those of his colleagues in the cabinet who also held titles and whom he apparently assumed to be less intelligent than himself. This rather shook him and he agreed (as I wired to you) to withhold publication. Nevertheless, the announcement was made in today's "Daily Gazette" in terms, which you will have seen. I can not say whether this was due to the premier's own indiscretion, but it is a very likely that it was given away by his own secretary, who was a journalist and an ex-editor of the Daily Gazette and who for some time has not been getting on well with the premier and is now about to leave him to take up a post in Juna Gadh.

The premier's present hesitations may easily lead him into difficulties where he may feel that a resignation is the only way out. He has already indicated to me perhaps the Congress M.L.A's and other security prisoners may perhaps now be safely released, but has made no definite proposal to that end. Meanwhile Nihchaldas has visited the Jail and had long talks with the detainees and has put up about ten pages of suggestions by which their lot may be made still more comfortable.

Yours sincerely
H. Dow

The following is a letter of the Governor to the Viceroy pursuant to Allah Bux Soomro on his decision to renounce his titles.

Government House Karachi
5th October 1942

Dear Lord Linlithgow

The fortnight has been one of comparative quiet in Sindh. Politically it has been marked by my premier's decision to resign his titles of Khan Bahadur and O.B.E., after long talks in which 1 tried to persuade him of the unwisdom of this action. Even locally it is only regarded as one of his political stunts and I shall be surprised if it does not weaken his influence in the districts. Where such titles are highly regarded and personal loyalty to the crown is a deep-rooted felling. Men take incised of the fact that his colleagues in the cabinet will not follow his example and that Allah Bux's own brother, which whom his personal and political relations are very close and whom he is at present running for the seat in the Central Legislative Assembly left vacant by the death of Sir Abdullah Haroon gained the title of Khan Bahadur only last year and shows no desire to relinquish it. Allah Bux has himself been absent from the province for the last week and the date of his return is still uncertain. He must, however, have been rather shaken by the indifference with which all except extreme Congress organs have regarded his gesture and it is clear that neither he nor his colleagues appreciate the immediate political consequences, which it will have for them all.

Yours sincerely
H. Dow

After many discussions the British administration decided to dismiss Allah Bux Soomro. The Governor H. Dow under section 51 of the Government of India Act of 1935, in his written order emphasised "as you are no more enjoying the confidence of the governor you are no more a premier."

L/P&J/5/258

Allah Bux Soomro offerd his opinion that he had the support of majority assembly members and his dismissal was a unconstitutional action of the governor because only members had the right to topple him through the vote of no-confidence.

The Governor not only took this undemocratic step but also instead of opposition leader Mohammad Ayub Khuhro, he called upon Sir Ghulam Hussain to form the ministry. This was not a rare instance because Sir Ghulam Hussain was also called upon by Lancelot Graham in 1937 to form the ministry with the strength of three members in the house of sixty.

Following is a report by the governor to the Viceroy.

22nd October 1942

Dear Lord Linlithgow
Almost the whole political activity of the province during this period has been concentrate on the situation leading to and resulting from the dismissal of Allah Bux from the premier-ship. It would be wearisome to you and unprofitable for me to attempt to give a full account of all of the comings and goings and the petty intrigues and disloyalties which the latest experiment in cabinet making has involved, prospects have changed almost from hour to hour and self-interest has counted for a good deal more than principle. But I will do my best to explain briefly the present position and the prospects of the immediate future.
Press comments on the "unconstitutional" nature of my action has grown more restrained from day to day, as it has become clear that Allah Bux only held his majority together by the fact that he was in power, Sir Ghulam has no difficulty gathering to himself a combination that will represent a far larger proportion of the Assembly than Allah Bux was ever able to claim himself. Allah Bux

L/P&J/5/258

himself too, is rather stopped from arguing that my action was unconstitutional for in the course of interview, which led to his dismissal he argued that this was the proper course for me to take in view of his refusal to resign. Though of course the last thing he expected to be taken at his word, and his dismissal clearly took all parties by surprise.

Yours sincerely
Hugh Dow

The reaction of the British Government to the renouncement of his titles is recorded as under:

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery
MSS. EUR. F. 125/11

16. You and I are hard at it by telegram about this tiresome business of Allah Bakhsh and his decorations. I am most grateful for your help and advice. I dare say that we shall come in for a certain amount of sniping when the decision is taken, but whatever the doubts I may have felt in the first instance as to the wise course, they are now removed and I am sure that we have no option but to go ahead. I very much hope that Dow will be able to keep a Ministry together, and have no early relapse into Section 93.

In a letter to Lord Linlithgow, Amery talks about their action against Allah Bux Soomro.

Mr Amery to the Marquess of Linlithgow
MSS. EUR. F. 125/11

PRIVATE

INDIA OFFICE,
5 October 1942

The Allah Bakhsh business is unfortunate. We have naturally made a great deal of play of the fact that nearly half the Provinces of India are self-governing, supporting

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the war effort and helping to suppress the Congress attack upon the life of India. All this will look a little unreal if the world hears that a Prime Minister has been dismissed for returning his O.B.E. It will be said that Dominion Prime Ministers like Deakin the Australian and Hertzog in South Africa have refused Privy Councillorships, that neither Canada nor South Africa allow any honours which carry titles or lead up to titles, and that we can hardly refuse to re-establish Ministries in other Provinces if their members announce beforehand that they would not accept honours (Amery seems to have overlooked our original exchange on this matter!). I have no doubt I can make a case in the House out of the general tone of Allah Bakhsh's letter, showing him unfit, in the present extremely critical situation, to command confidence. But there again, the fact that he makes so much of Winston's statement will at once be seized on by Parliamentary critics, who will sum up the situation by saying that a Prime Minister has been dismissed because he does not like Winston's statement. There is also the possible repercussion in Bengal. So if he should resign under threat of dismissal, I confess I would regard it as a preferable solution.

Linlithgow to Amery, Allah Bux after his dismissal would not support us.

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery
Telegram, MSS. EUR. F. 125/23

IMMEDIATE SIMLA,
6 October 1942, 2.15 pm
PERSONAL Received: 6 October, 12.35 pm

No. 449-S.C. Your telegram of 3rd October, No. 17254. Object of questions is of course to put onus on us of seeking out political leaders and find the settlement for them, which they cannot find themselves. With Congress leaders in jail or not cooperating, there remain outside Europeans only the Mahasabha and Muslim League. Mookerjee I have seen, and you know what passed between us. Jinnah I asked the other day to come and

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dine, and he refused (characteristically) on grounds of previous engagement. I did not think it well to make further approach to him nor will there be least point in my sending for him unless I have something to say in the political field which I have not. I do not want any publicity given to his refusal, which has not got out here. Fazal Haq proposed at an earlier stage to come to Delhi and to ask for an interview, but was unavoidably detained in Bengal. On the other hand, I have just had three days with the very representative National Defence Council, and have and individual talks with many of its members (Haq and Parlakimedi very unfortunately absent and Allah Bakhsh would not help our argument given imminence of his dismissal) and I have also, in addition to interviews since 8th August with people of standing such as the European group (no publicity was given to this), Zia-ud-din, Sir Mohammad Yousuf, & co. in the Assembly, the assistance of my own Council, whom this might be an opportunity to boost as representative individuals.

Following is a letter of Linlithgow to Mr Amery about the resignation or dismissal of Allah Bux Soomro and proffers advice on how to counter the activities of Allah Bux Soomro.

In his telegram 2837-S of September Lord Linlithgow suggested that we shall have to put up with Allah Bux's renunciation of his honours. MSS.EUR.F. 125/23. In reply (telegram 16709 of 24 September) Mr Amery Said: I find it hard so stomach prospect of continuance in office, particularly in war-time, of a premier whose allegiance to the constitution is to be assessed by his the king and the Viceroy though he added that the paramount consideration must be the public interest, and if Lord Linlithgow was satisfied that (a) an alternative Government was not possible, and (b) Section 93 administration was undesirable in present conditions in Sindh or at any rate less desirable than the retention of Allah Bakhsh as premier, then I suppose we must put up with it . L/P&J/8/647

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr. Amery
(Extract)
M.SS. EUR. F. 125 II

As I dictate this letter news comes through by telephone from Dow of the conclusion of his discussions with Allah Bakhsh. I am sorry to have been such a nuisance to you over this tiresome case, but I quite appreciate the reasons for which the Cabinet was anxious to avoid dismissal. Or if dismissal had to come, the underlining of the fact that it was dismissal and as you will have seen, I therefore suggested a revised form of announcement for use by Dow in case Allah Bakhsh should refuse to resign, which you will I hope have thought of an improvement on the earlier draft, and which Dow in the events that have happened is now employing. I can not quite understand why Allah Bakhsh should have been so tiresome about this business: but I dare say that Dow is right in thinking that his head has been a little turned and also that he has the future a good deal in view. What I do sincerely hope is that Dow will be able to get Ghulam Hussain, whom I gather he is seeing today, to form a Ministry without delay, for that is the best counter to Allah Bakhsh's activities and the best answer to any critics outside who may suggest that he really represents feeling in the Province. I get the impression that while certain of the Hindu Ministers like Nihchaldas are very ready to coquet with Congress, Allah Bakhsh has in fact been in the Province the only person really in close touch with them: and if Ghulam Hussain is able to form a Ministry, the result may admit of being regarded as another check to Congress.

Best luck.

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After his dismissal Allah Bux Soomro attended a meeting of his like-minded friends on the fast of Mahatma Gandhi.

Here is a letter of Raj Gopalachari to Sir G. Laithwaite.

Mr Rajgopalacharia to Sir G. Laithwaite
MSS. EUR. F. 125/125

28 FEROZSHAH ROAD,
NEW DELHI,
19 February 1943

Dear Sir Gilbert,

The Conference of Leaders invited to consider the situation arising out of the fast declared by Mahatma Gandhi met this afternoon and they appointed a Committee to draft a Resolution to be adopted by the Conference. The Committee consisted of the following persons:

Right Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru: Dr. M. R. Jayakar; Dr. Shayam Prasad Mukerji; Sir Rajagopalacharia; Mr. Allah Bakhsh; Mr. G.L. Mehta; Mr. K. M. Munshi; Sir Jagdish Prasad; Mr. N. M. Joshi; Mr. Bhulabhai Desai; Sir Maharaj Singh; Master Tara Singh; Sir Ardeshir Dalal; Pandit H. N. Kunzru; Sir A. H. Ghuznavi; Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai; Mr. K. C. Neogy; Raja Maheshwar Dyal; Dr. Bannerji; Mr. H.A. Lalljee; Mr. N.C. Chatterji; Mr Randive; Dr. Moonje; Mr Kiron Shankar Roy; Khwaja Hassan Nizami; Muhammad Zahiruddin; Mrs. Sarala Chaudhurani; Dr. Shaukat Ansari; Mr. M.A. Kazmi; Mr. Zafar Hussain, Mrs. K. Sayani; Mr. Abdul Halim Siddiqi and Mrs. Hanna Sen.

They have unanimously adopted the enclosed Resolution for being placed before the Conference tomorrow morning. But, in view of the alarming reports received about the condition of Mahatma Gandhi, the Committee resolved to send the Resolution to His Excellency, advance, for immediate action. I, accordingly, do so with

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the request that you may kindly place it before his Excellency.

Yours sincerely
C. Rajagopalachari

Enclosure to No. 498

[There follows the text of Enclosure 1 to No. 506]

Following is one more letter from Sir T.B Sapru to Sir Laithwaite on the fast of Mahatma Gandhi.

Sir T.B. Sapru to Sir G. Laithwaite
MSS. EUR. F. 125/125

28 FEROZSHAH ROAD
NEW DELHI,
20 February 1943

Dear Sir Gilbert,
I send you here with a copy of a Resolution unanimously adopted by the Conference at today's Session. I also send herewith a list of persons who moved and supported the Resolution. I further send herewith a list of a few prominent persons who either attended the Conference or

have associated themselves with it. I shall thank you to place the letter and the enclosures before His Excellency the Viceroy.

Yours sincerely,
T.B. SAPRU

Enclosure 1 to No. 506

This Conference representing different creeds, communities and interests in India, gives expression to the universal desire of the people of this country that, in the interests of the future of India and of international goodwill, Mahatma Gandhi should be released immediately and unconditionally. This Conference views with the gravest concern the serious situation that will arise if the Government fail to take timely action and prevent a catastrophe. This Conference, therefore, urges

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the Government to release Mahatma Gandhi forthwith.

TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

Enclosure 2 to No. 506

LIST OF PERSONS WHO MOVED AND SUPPORTED THE RESOLUTION

[There follow names and descriptions of the following: Dr M. R. Jayakar, Dr S. P. Mookerjee, Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, Sir Suleiman Cassum Haji Mitha, Master Tara Singh, Reverend J. Mackenzie, Srimati Saraladevi Chaudhurani, Allah Bakhsh, Sir Vijaya of Vizianagram, Sir A. H. Ghuznavi, Maulana Ahmed Sayeed Saheb, N. M. Joshi, Abdul Qaiyum, G. L. Mehta, Zahiruddin, Humayun Kabir, Pandit H. N. Kunzru, K. M. Munshi, Sardar Sant Singh, B. T. Randive.]

Here is a cable of Sir T.B. Sapru and others to Churchill. They made a request for the release of Gandhi.

Sir T.B. Sapru and others to Mr Churchill
L/P&J/8/600: f 247

21 February 1943, 8.25 pm

Three hundred public men from different parts of India representing various communities, creeds and interests including commerce and industry, landed interests, workers, communists, Hindus, Muslims Christians, Sikhs, Parsies and British missionaries met yesterday at New Delhi and unanimously passed a Resolution urging immediate and unconditional release of Mahatma Gandhi whose condition is fast approaching a crisis. We fear that unless immediately released he will pass away. We wish to explain to British public opinion that the Mahatma is

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fasting only to be able to review the situation as a free man and to advise the people accordingly and not on the issue of independence. We are convinced that the terms of his letter of twenty-third September I recently published by Government amount to an unequivocal disapproval on behalf of himslef and the Congress of all acts of violence. The Chairman of the Conference, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, submitted the resolution to the Viceroy yesterday afternoon and immediately afterwards he received a reply from the Viceroy declining to interfere as no new factor had arisen to alter the previous decision and enclosing the official as no new factor had arisen to alter the previous decision and enclosing the official communication of 10th February. We deeply deplore that the advice of so many representative and responsible men should have been summarily turned down by the Viceroy. We firmly believe that if the Mahatma's life is spared a way will be opened to the promotion of peace and goodwill as surely as his death as a British prisoner will intensify public embitterment. The charges brought by Government against the Mahatma do not rest upon an examination by any impartial tribunal or independent body of men. We firmly believe that much of the trouble which has arisen was preventable by timely action on the part of Government last summer and that the Mahatma should have been allowed to see the Viceroy to find a solution as he desired. Millions of our countrymen feel that the responsibility for saving the Mahatma's life now rests only with the Government. We therefore urge that the Mahatama should be forthwith released. As under the existing constitution the ultimate responsibility is of the British Parliament for the peace and tranquility of India we request that this cable may be brought to its notice in order that it may do justice in the matter. We are convinced that wise and liberal statesmanship will solve the Indo-British problem more speedily and effectively than stern repression.

[There follow names and description of these signatories: Sir T. B. Sapru, C. Rajagopalachari, Allah Bakhsh, N.C. Chatterjee, Sir A.H. Ghuznave, Mrs Saraladevi Chaudhurani, Dr Ashraf, Dr S. Ansari, B.T. Randive, Dr S. P. Mookerjee, Dr B.S. Moonjee, Raza, Maheshwar Dayal Seth, Bhulabhai Desai, Dr P. N. Banerjee, Pandit

H. N. Kunzru, Mrs Hannah Sen, P. Subbarayan, J. R. D. Tata, N.M. Joshi, Sir Ardeshir R. Dalal, Dr Sachchidananda Sinha, G.L. Mehta, Kiransankar Roy, Qazi Mohammad Ahmed Kazmi, Sewa Singh Gill, Humayun Kabir, Dr M. R. Jayakar, K. M. Munshi, Sir Jagdish Prasad.]

Linlithgow to Sir R. Lumely about the fast of Gandhi.

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Sir Lumely (Bombay)

MSS. EUR. F. 125/57

The Viceroy's House,
New Delhi,
11 March 1943

Private and personal

My Dear Lumely

12. No doubt we can now look for the usual pressure from the so-called moderates who are now meeting at Bombay for a gesture, the release of Gandhi, contact with the Working Committee or the like. It would be a waste of time to speculate on the nature of any approach by the moderates or to discuss what answer to give to hypothetical questions. But my view remains very strong that if they do make a move, and subject to what they may say, the answer must be that if Gandhi, as I told him in one of my letters, is prepared to call off and withdraw the August resolution, and give suitable assurances for the future (which I may add will include the withdrawal of terms such as "rebellion" and "do or die"), I shall then be prepared to consider the situation. But I am certain that we ought to take a firm line with the moderates. None of them count for a row of pins. They stand for nothing in the country. I doubt very much many of them being able to win an election. They have done nothing to help us, and I am not a bit concerned about their feelings in the present circumstances. If they do ask me to receive a deputation and I agree to do so, I shall let them have it pretty straight: and as you and I of course realise only too

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well, they are wholly unrepresentative, while no one can suggest that Allah Bakhsh and Ghuznavi count for anything in the Muslim world and the Depressed Classes and the Princes are out of it altogether.

Another cable by Linlithgow to Amery on the fast of Gandhi.

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery
MSS. EUR. F. 125/24

IMMEDIATE

NEW DELHI,
13 March 1943, 7 pm
Received: 13 March, 5.30 pm

No. 688-S. Following is text of resolution dated Bombay, 10th March:-

We are of opinion that the deplorable events of the last few months require a reconsideration of their policy both by the Government and the Congress. The recent talks which some of us have had with Gandhiji lead us to believe that a move for reconciliation at the present juncture will bear fruit. It is our conviction that if Gandhiji is set at liberty he will do his best to give guidance and assistance in the solution of the internal deadlock and that there need be no fear that there would be any danger to the successful prosecution of the war. The Viceroy may be approached on our behalf to permit a few representatives to meet Gandhiji to authoritatively ascertain his reaction to the recent events and to explore with him avenues for reconciliation. Thus says a statement issued by the All-India leaders who have been meeting in Bombay.

The following leaders were present at today's meeting held at Mr. Jayakar's residence: Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. M. R. Jayakar, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, Mr. G. D. Birla, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Mr Bhulabhai J. Desai, Mr. K.M Munshi, Sir Ardeshir Dalal, Mr. J. R. D.

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Tata, Mr. S. A. Brelvi, Mr. Walchand Hirachand, Sir Chunilal Bhaichand Mehta, Sir Homi Mody, Mr. Devadas Gandhi, Master Tara Singh, Mr. S. Ramanathan, Mr. G. L. Mehta, Mr. Allah Bux, Sir Jagdish Prasad, Mr. Kasturbhai Lalbhai and Dr. Mackenzie.

Mr. V. D. Savarkar, who was unable to be present at the meeting, has signified his assent to the statement issued. Besides, the following leaders who could not be present in Bombay are also stated to be in agreement with the statement, and copies of the statement are being posted to them to obtain their signatures.

Mr. K. Srinivasan, Mr. C. R. Srinivasan, Mr. N. R. Sarker, Dr. Shayam Porsad Mookerjee, Mr. Amritlal .V. Thakkar, Raja Maheshwardayal Seth, Mr. P. Subbarayan, Pandit Hirdaynath Kunzru, Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi, Mr. N.M. Joshi, Sardar Sant Singh and Mr. M. S. Aney.

Following is a letter of Tej Bahadur Sapru to Sir Gilbert on the fast of Gandhi.

Mr Munshi to Sir G. Laithwaite
MSS. EUR. F. 125/125

26 RIDGE ROAD, BOMBAY,
15 March 1943

Dear Sir Gilbert,
I am forwarding herewith a letter of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, which was left with me on 11th to be forwarded to you as soon as the list of signatories to the resolution was complete.

With kind regards,
Yours sincerely,
K. M. MUNSHI

BOMAY, 11 March 1943

Dear Sir Gilbert,
I am enclosing herewith copy of a resolution which was adopted at the meeting held at Bombay on the 9th and 10th of March over which I presided. The names of the gentlemen who are parties to this resolution will appear

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from the copy, which I am enclosing.

I shall request you kindly to lay it before His Excellency the Viceroy. If His Excellency should find it convenient to receive a delegation to explain or discuss anything in this resolution I shall arrange for such a delegation – not exceeding 4 in number. In that case, I shall request you kindly to fix a date giving sufficient time for the delegation to reach Delhi.

Reply to this may kindly be sent to me at my permanent address at Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,
TEJ BAHADUR SAPRU

Enclosure 2 to No. 591
RESOLUTION

[There follows the text of the resolution as in the first para. of No. 584, with names, and descriptions of these signatories: Sir T. B. Sapru, Dr M. R. Jayakar, Srinivasa Sastri, C. Rajagopalachari, Bhulabhai Desai, K. M. Munshi, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, Raja Narendra Nath, Raja Maheswar Dayal Seth, Sir Jagdish Prasad, Sir P. S. Sivaswami Ayyar, Master Tara Singh, Allah Bakhsh, Sir Maharaj Singh, the Bishop of Dhornakal, K. Srinivasan, J. R. D. Tata. G. D. Birla, Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, Seth Walchand Hirachand, Sir Chunilal B. Mehta, G. L. Mehta, P. C. Joshi, T. R. Venkatarama Sastri, S. A. Brelvi, the Reverend J. McKenzie, Sir Vijaya of Vizianagram, Sir A. H. Ghuznavi, Dr. P. N. Banerjee, Sardar Sant Singh, Pandit H. N. Kunzru, Dr Sachchidananda Sinha, N. M. Joshi, Mahomedbhoy I. M. Rawjee, Sir Chunilal V. Mehta, Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Sir Ardeshir R. Dalal, C. R. Srinivasan, Dr P. Subbarayan, S. Ramanathan, Sheth Haridas Madhavji, Qazi Mohammad Ahmed Kazmi, N. C. Chatterjee, and Tulsidas Kilachand.]

Here is a report by the Governor of Sindh to the Viceroy, which is an evidence regarding the political situation and positions, of Allah Bux Soomro, Jinnah and the Muslim League in Sindh.

Sir H. Dow (Sindh) to the Marquess of Linlithgow
(Extract)
MSS. EUR. F. 125/99

D.-o. No. 199-F.R. 5 May 1943

1. I notice that Jinnah threatened extension of his control over the provincial Muslim League government and asserted that 99 percent of the Sindh Muslims were with the League. There has undoubtedly been a great extension of League membership in Sindh since the discomfiture of Allah Bakhsh. But I still think that Jinnah would find, if he attempted to put pressure on the Sindh Ministry in a matter in which they wished to resist, that his new membership in Sindh would fall away as easily as it has been gathered. Neither of his two new converts in the Ministry, and very few outside would be staunch; and it is quite possible that all the Ministry would resign from the League rather than give up office. I should think it likely that Jinnah himself is aware of this, and that he is not likely to issue any of his ukases to the Sindh Ministry in present circumstances.

Following is a constitutional discussion by Sir J. Herbert about the power of Governor regarding dismissal of any minister or chief minister.

Sir J. Herbert (Bengal) to the Marquess of Linlithgow
(Extract)
MSS. EUR. F. 125/43

GOVT. HOUSE, DARJEELING,
16 June 1943

Dear Linlithgow,
I should welcome your advice upon a question, which not only raises general principles of constitutional propriety but also may (though I hope it will not) be of the utmost practical importance in Bengal in the not too distant future.

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Stated in general terms, the question is can a Governor when seeking to secure a Ministry in accordance with paragraph VII of his Instrument of Instructions, abstain from taking into consultation (or, in other words, approaching as a potential Chief Minister) the person most likely to command a stable majority in the Legislature if that person does not "enjoy the Governor's confidence "? The words in inverted commas have a certain currency, though I find no authority for them in the Constitution Act or the Instrument of Instructions. Indeed, paragraph VII of the Instrument explicitly uses only the phrase "to command the confidence of the Legislature" Section 51 (I) of the Act provides that Ministers shall hold office during the Governor's pleasure, and popular expressions such as "enjoying the Governor's confidence" would appear to have reference to the phraseology of that section.

Another way of stating the question would be - Do grounds which would justify a Governor in dismissing a minister (or chief minister) constitute justification for the Governor refusing to consider the person in question as a potential chief minister although he commands a stable majority in the Legislature?

To put it in a concrete form - having regard to the reasons which justified Dow's dismissal of Allah Bux would Dow have been justified in refusing to ask Allah Bux to form a ministry had the question arisen and Allah Bux commanded a stable majority? It does seem arguable that if the Governor knows in advance that a person, if appointed minister, will deserve dismissal he should abstain from appointing that person minister, let alone chief minister.

The answer, at any rate during the war, will not (as I see it) be dictated wholly by constitutional considerations. You will recollect that you made it very clear to me that any Ministry designed to replace our recent Section 93 regime must be pledged to support the war effort. I also understand that Reid remained on for some time in Section 93 although there was a stable Ministry offering, because it was not pledged to the war effort. It would seem therefore that practical, as well as purely

constitutional, considerations must be weighed in answering my question.

The practical application of the answer in which I am interested would, of course, be to the event of the fall of Nazimuddin's Ministry. As I indicated recently in connection with his request for permission to visit Sarat Bose, I do not wish you to think that that is at all likely; but, as you yourself suggested in the same connection, it is a possibility to which in certain circumstances we must face up. In short, would I be justified in such an event in refusing to call on Haq (or Mookerjee) to form a Ministry, on the ground of his combined record in, and after vacating office?

Following is a letter of Amery to Wavell about the renouncement of titles of Allah Bux Soomro and Casey.

Mr Amery to Field Marshal Viscount Wavell

L/PO/10/21

PRIVATE AND SECRET

INDIA OFFICE,
12 November 1943
Received; 2 December

I have telegraphed to you about Casey, who is willing to go to Bengal for at any rate three years, but in view of his political ambitions in Australia doesn't want to take a peerage or even a knighthood. I can see some objections from the point of view of Indians, who feel that nobody entitled to refuse an honour from the King and who may feel that Casey is doing the same kind of thing as Allah Bakhsh tried to do.

Assassination

A great man of Sindh with derring-do and courage was busy in trying to forge inter-religious unity. However, people with vested interest were not happy with his nationalistic and secular approach and they planned to remove him from the political scene.

On 14 May 1943, in broad daylight while he was riding in a horse-drawn carriage he was ambushed and assassinated by unknown men near his hometown Shikarpur. This makes a sad event all the more tragic.

His murder gave rise to certain questions, which have still to be answered and, as usual, like other high-profile crimes, the British government neither apprehended the culprits nor the hidden hands that plotted his murder. Rumour had it that Hurs, the disciples of Sibghatullah Shah Pir Pagaro, were angry with Soomro.

Mohammad Ayub Khuhro, the then minister, was nominated by police on the statement of his land agent, as has been narrated by Dr Hamida Khuhro in her book.

The police arrested Daresh on 19 September 1944 and after a few days in police custody the man was ready to give a statement implicating Khuhro in the murder.

According to Daresh, Khuhro told him that Allah Bux Soomro was their mortal enemy and that he should ask Wali Muhammad Kharal to get the Hurs to kill him and that they would get a reward of approximately Rs.10,000 to 12,000.

Daresh subsequently hatched the conspiracy and Soomro was murdered at his order.

Field Marshal Viscount Wavell to Mr Amery
L/PO/10/21

PRIVATE AND SECRET

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE
NEW DELHI,
27 September 1944

There is not much political news from the Provinces. You may remember that K.B. Khuhro, one of the Sindh Ministers, was suspected of complicity in the murder of Allah Bakhsh, the former Premier. His land agent who was also suspected, and absconded, was recently arrested and made a statement implicating him. The Inspector-General of Police informed Dow that he would have to arrest Khuhro, and Dow, after consulting the Premier, told Khuhro that his best course would be to resign. Khuhro agreed and his resignation has been announced. It will make no difference to the stability of the Ministry.

Dr. Hamida Khuhro has narrated in her work that Governor. H. Dow and I.G. Police Ray were interested in the arrest of M.A.Khuhro and the Premier Ghulam Hussain's behaviour towards his arrest was not proper, because as a head of Government he was in a position to protect his colleague.

Following is a report by the Viceroy to Amery secretary of state about the need to reconstitute the ministry and the political atmosphere of the province.

Field Marshal Viscount Wavell to Mr Amery
L/PO/10/21

PRIVATE AND SECRET

THE VICEROY'S HOUSE,
NEW DELHI,
11 July 1944

Sindh is the latest Province to show symptoms of a ministerial crisis. At the approaching session there is to be

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a no-confidence motion against Khuhro, a somewhat disreputable minister who is generally supposed to have a good deal to do with the murder of Allah Bakhsh. Dow would be glad to drop him, and so, I gather, would the Premier. In the last few days the Sindh Muslim League have demanded the resignation of the Ministry as a whole. The Premier is treating this threat with contempt, and has told Dow that the provincial League organisation has no right of interference, and will probably be over-ruled by Jinnah. Some reconstruction of the Ministry may be necessary, but I do not think there will be a breakdown of Parliamentary government.

Allah Bux Soomro who espoused a free and secular Asian subcontinent with autonomous and sovereign states, was assassinated by persons who considered him dangerous to their future plan. But at what cost? Future events witnessed that the atmosphere of distrust between Congress, Muslim League and the British administration ended in the killing of a million people and destruction of property worth millions.

Allah Bux Soomro had differences with two groups - the British administration and the Muslim League.

British Administration: Allah Bux Soomro tried to bridge the gulf between British administration and Congress. His conversation with the Governor of Sindh, as reported by him to the Viceroy, proves this fact.

Government House Karachi.
22nd August, 1941

Dear Lord Linlithgow
You will see that the official fortnightly report for the first half of August, a copy of which accompanies this letter, is rather a colourless document, and I do not think I have much to say by way of comment or amplification. The fortnight has indeed been a quiet one, but there is a

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general feeling abroad that, consequent on the move which you have taken in expanding your executive council and in setting up the Defence Advisory Council, the "deadlock" is inevitably in process of resolution. There is a certain reticence in making overt comment on this, but I should say that it is felt that the march of events in the Middle East will lead the bulk of Congressmen to openly support the war front and that there may be a split between Moslems in which the bulk of the community will follow Sikander, while Jinnah and the Pakistan rump will stand aloof.

This is a view, which was put to me yesterday by my premier,.who asked me to "mark his words" that we were on the eve of a rapprochement between the Government of India and the Congress and in this connection he regarded the recent release of Satyamurthi and Valabhai Patel as significant. He was himself very pleased to see signs of such a move and considered that all signs of disunity would vanish under this "expulsive power of a new affection" and that there would quickly follow enormous contributions both of men and money in aid of the war effort.

Yours sincerely
H. Dow

Allah Bux tried his best to iron out the differences that existed between the Congress and British firstly due to the non-cooperation of the party in the War effort in 1939 and, secondly, due to the Quit India Movement of Mahatma Gandhi. But the British had their own priorities.

Muslim League: Allah Bux Soomro was a secular and nationalist politician. The Muslim League believed in the two-nation theory, both had their own nationalistic approach, as the former perceived the Asian subcontinent as a multiracial, multicultural, multilingual land and had its own identifications for thousands of years, but the latter regarded the Muslims as a separate nations.

Although Allah Bux had differences with the Muslim League, he made an appeal to the party to rise

about petty interest and fight for a common cause with the freedom movement parties.

And the third group, which was unhappy with Allah Bux, was the Hurs. Yet it is apparent from a cable sent out by a high-ranking British administration official that Allah Bux had passive sympathy for the Hurs.

Here is a cable by the linlithgow to Amery

The Marquess of Linlithgow to Mr Amery
MSS. EUR. F. 125/23

IMMEDIATE	NEW DELHI,
	4 October 1942, 2.50 am
PERSONAL	Received: 4 October, 12.55 am

> Dow remarks that even in Sindh the movement is not finished and that efforts are being made to keep things simmering, with something more than passive sympathy from Hindu Press and Ministers and now from Allah Bakhsh. He adds that undoubtedly Martial Law and floods are largely responsible for freedom of Province outside Karachi from disturbance, and present demand for restriction of Martial Law is motivated by desire for political agitation in other large towns coupled with fear of swifter and severer penalties under Martial Law.

So, the forces that planned the assassination of Allah Bux continued to be unidentified. But one thing is almost clear that, whomever the killers were, they felt threatened by his existence. It was almost as if he was assassinated to unleash the dark forces of communalism upon the land.

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Epilogue

Allah Bux Soomro remembered at the time of partition

Allah Bux Sommro's sudden death created a big vacuum in the politics of India in general and Sindh in particular. This vacuum could not be filled, because only a stalwart of his calibre could negotiate with the future communal problems and the British administration's policy of divide and rule.

The attitudes of the leadership of the Congress and the Muslim League regarding the resolution of issues were revolving in their minds, as the Congress leadership's version was that India was one country and that Indians were one nation and the Muslim League subscribed to the view that separation was the only solution for the benefit of the Indian Muslims as a whole.

This atmosphere of distrust and non-cooperation was running high when Jinnah and the Muslim League working committee passed a resolution against the Quit India movement on 16 August 1942 at Bombay.

G. M. Sayed made a protest and advised Jinnah and the League working committee that before passing any resolution; the Muslim League should open a dialogue with Congress, as narrated by him.

> I said that it would be highly improper for us to regard that the Congress Quit India resolution which was part of its independent struggle, was against the Muslims I added that since the Congress wanted the British to leave India, we should not torpedo its struggle against imperialism by endorsing the proposed resolution because this would close the doors on any future League–Congress settlement.

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Mr. Jinnah reacted angrily to this. It was not possible to negotiate any settlement with Congress, he said. At this, I proposed an amendment to the effect that we should hold talks with the Congress and if it accepted our terms, we should enter into an agreement with it but if it didn't, we would be free to pass any resolution. A one-sided resolution would not be appropriate, I said, Mr. Ayub Khuhro supported me, as did the Raja Sahib of Mahmoodabad. The latter was snubbed by Mr. Jinnah, at which he walked out in protest. Hasan Isphahani was also not allowed to speak, nor was Nawab Ismail Khan. My proposed amendment was shot down and the resolution was carried as moved but with a note of dissent by me.

Both the parties up to the day of Independence did not reconsider the issues, except once when Jinnah agreed to the ABC formula. Nehru's statement in this regard gave an opportunity to Jinnah to retrace his steps from the decided formula. Abul Kalam Azad did not like the behaviour of Nehru and he accepted the fact that leaving the seat of the presidentship for Nehru was a miscalculation. When freedom through the partition of India was under consideration, he suggested to the Congress leadership that for avoiding division the Congress should offer the prime ministership of India to Jinnah. However, the Congress leadership did not agree to this proposal.

Both parties played their cards according to their priorities and the British administration also did the same. G. M. Sayed in his interview with the Cabinet Mission on 2nd April 1946 enlightened them about the whole situation.

Speaking as one who stood outside the two main parties, he deplored the intransigent attitude of both Congress and the Muslim League. Each was taking up a very strong stand on its own principles and would not listen to those who, like himself, urged more moderate views.

At the Simla Conference each side had refused to

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compromise on points of secondary importance, for example, the right of the Muslim League to speak for All Muslims. As long as this attitude persisted, there was no possibility of a settlement—the arbitrary dictates for the party high commands were destructive not only for provincial autonomy but for the freedom and welfare of the Indian people.

Nevertheless, Congress and the Muslim League had the Indian masses behind them, and it was essential that they should come to terms. There was no possibility of the Indian problem being solved without a settlement between them. If the Muslim League were bypassed, the Muslims would stand solidly with Mr. Jinnah. The delegation must not negotiate with each of the two organisations, nor should they make statements, e.g. to effect that the minorities would not be allowed to veto the will of the majority party.

Instead, they must bring the Congress and League Leaders face to face, for only by this means would agreement between them be possible. If the Delegation could not get the two parties to agree they would have to arbitrate between them. Doubtless their verdict would not satisfy either side, and the British would have to remain in India for some time in order to keep the peace. But ultimately each party would come to realise that they would have to accept the imposed solution.

At the time when two of the subcontinent's largest parties were deadlocked and engaged in diametrically opposed public posturing, there was need for a visionary leader who could defuse the atmosphere of mistrust.

There was no other powerful group that could ensure a check and balance system was in place. Only one group consisting of various parties, progressive Sindh Muslim League, Ahrars, Shia Political Party, Jamiat Ulema Hind, etc, disagreed with their strategies and requested them to think over the issues in the scenario of the sub-continent's future and not according to their priorities. But no major party cared about this.

Given the calming influence Allah Bux Soomro could bear as a president of Azad Muslim Board and the premier of Sindh, one can imagine how different things would have turned out to be in the subcontinent.

There are still questions raised about his assassination and its timing, which conspiracy theorists say, was essential to the future plan of the plotters.

The three major powers, the British administration, the Congress and the Muslim League already had worked out their plans. To some extent they got results according to their desires, but some did not take shape as planned. The British administration due to the Second World War was not in a position to continue its rule in India. Moreover, they were under pressure from the United States of America to free India.

Another reason for their impatience in the matter was that there were signs of rebellion in the British Indian armed forces, which had manifested itself in the naval uprising and strikes in Bombay and Karachi. Fearing a bloody revolution in India, the British announced the partition formula on 3rd June 1947. Its salient features were.

1. India's division into two states.
2. The two States were to form their own Constituent Assemblies.
3. There would be a referendum in the N.W.F.P. to decide whether it wanted to join India or Pakistan.
4. There would be no fresh elections in the NWFP but the people of the province would be asked whether they wanted to join Pakistan or India.
5. The provinces of Bengal and the Punjab would be partitioned.

6. In Assam, the people of Sylhet would, through a referendum, be asked which country they wanted to join.
7. India would get Calcutta while Lahore would become part of Pakistan.
8. A Boundary Commission would be appointed to demarcate the frontiers between the two countries.
9. A Commission would be appointed to divide the financial and military assets between the two countries.
10. With British sovereignty ending over India, the princely states would be given the right to choose which of the two countries to join.
11. The British would hand over power to the two Dominions in August.

Para No. 1 was in favour of the Muslim League but para five did not suit Jinnah and the League.

Jinnah and Muslim League thought that in division, United Punjab and Bengal Provinces would be parts of Pakistan but both provinces were divided into eastern and western parts.

Jinnah launched a protest with Mountbatten but the die had already been cast.

The partition of the two provinces compelled different communities to leave their homeland. The same position occurred in Muslim and Hindu minority provinces.

Perhaps Allah Bux Soomro's presence at the time would have led to less unpleasantness over this matter, because of his stature among both Hindus and Muslims. He might have met with the leaders of the Punjab and Bengal to reduce already heightened tensions. In the absence of such initiatives widespread communal riots broke out in

these two provinces, as well as in Bihar, Western U.P. and Delhi.

Ghulam Muhammad, finance minister in Jinnah's cabinet, is reported to have advised the Hindu business community of Hyderabad in particular and the whole of Sindh in general to show the same spirit, which Allah Bux Soomro had preached. This was in September 1947, during an address to the Amal community of Hyderabad, Sindh. It is a pity that Allah Bux Soomro's professed ideas were recalled so late in the day.

The more horrible aspect was that migration made the situation terrible. G.M. Sayed narrated this story as under:

> The Partition plan was accepted by the Congress and other nationalist parties as a solution to the communal problem but it only exacerbated it, and Hindu-Muslim riots assumed all-India dimensions during which hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives, including innocent children. Countless women were raped, and property worth millions was destroyed and hundreds of thousands of people left homes of their ancestors. Hatred and terrorism replaced love. Sindh was no exception, and the Sindhis were divided into two with around 1,300,000 people leaving their homes and hearths for India, with the rest mourning their departure along the banks of the Indus.

A dangerous situation was created on the boundary limits of the Punjab. The Muslim League leadership was of the opinion that the British administration had done injustice to Pakistan.

Some historians are of the view that this was an act of revenge on the part of the British administration, as according to their desire, Mohammad Ali Jinnah did not accept Mountbatten as Governor General of Pakistan.

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This decision of Jinnah was an unexpected shock for the British administration because they were hoping that, as a Governor General Mountbatten would be able to look after the interests of the British in both countries.

Under this shock they did not care much about the aftermath of partition, there is yet another question mark whether the parties concerned were more interested in their selfish motives or they truly wanted to better the lot of the people through partition.

The British should have at least indicated a fairer solution to the accession of Kashmir in 1947 by leaving this question open, in spite of having British advisers such as Sir Walter Monckton in the two states. They invited trouble for both the countries, specially with regard to Kashmir, which has resulted in heavy military expenditure for the two sides and poverty for their masses.

Allah Bux's role as an apostle of peace and secular harmony, was sorely missed by all concerned in 1947.

After his assassination Sindh fell under the influence of communalism. Both Sindhi Hindus and Muslims did not resolve their issues because they followed the policies of central parties like the Congress and the Muslim League. G.M. Sayed and Nihchaldas Vazirani and some others from both groups realised the demerits of central interference and they also felt that communalism was harmful for Sindh and its inhabitants. But the efforts of the former, latter and their like-minded friends were not successful.

There was a compelling need for a great personality like Allah Bux to counter the undemocratic behaviour of two Governors of Sindh respectively, Hugh Dow and Muddie and the overall intransigent attitude of all-India parties.

For the freedom of India not only the Congress and the Muslim League struggled but also many other parties did the same and their version about the future constitution was different from that of the two major parties. Specially, Sibghatulah Shah Pir Pagaro, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Maulana Ubedullah Sindhi, Allah Bux Soomro, G.M. Sayed and Abdul Samad Achakzai did not agree with their above-mentioned theory of nations. These leaders were of the view that the Asian subcontinent is a land of many nations with their languages, cultures, history and geography. Their formula was that a loose federation would be a more effective option in the future constitution.

Allah Bux Soomro's statement of 7th October and G. M. Sayed's interview with the cabinet mission were some examples.

To acquaint the readers with its full significance, I am quoting here G. M. Sayed's conversation with the cabinet mission and the Viceroy.

> Mr. Sayed said that he believed in the independence of areas with Muslim majorities. In Western India such areas should be joined in a Federation, of which each constituent state should be represented in the Federal Government on an equal basis and not in proportion to population. There should be a similar Federation of Muslim areas in Eastern India.
>
> Apart from these two Muslim Federations, the remaining Provinces of what in now British India should form a Hindu Federation and there should be a fifth [sic] Federation consisting of such of the larger States as might be able to retain a measure of autonomy. The smaller States should be merged either in the Muslim or Hindu Federations or in larger States. A separate Sikh State was

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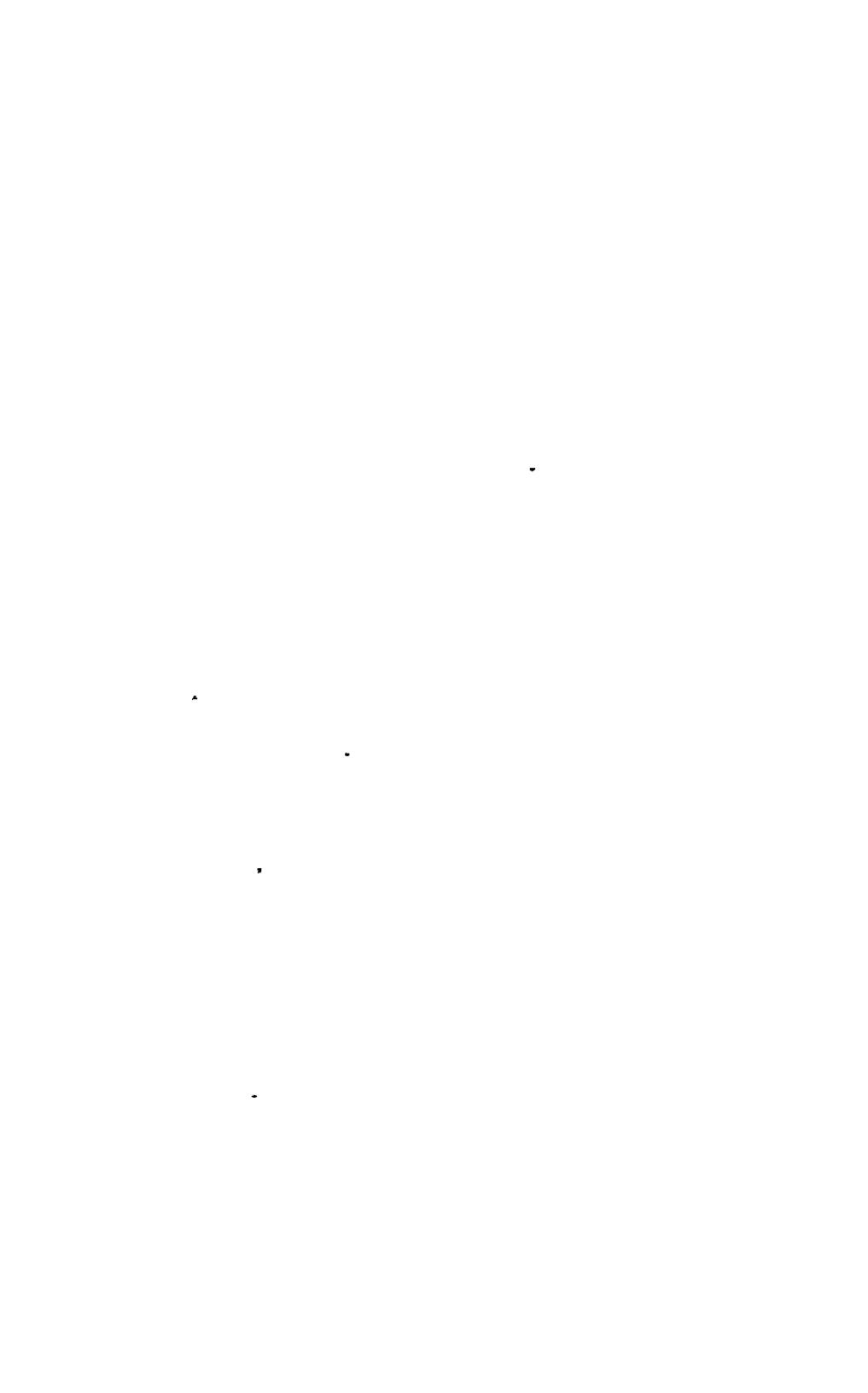
impracticable unless there were extensive transfers of population, since the Sikhs were not in a majority in any district.

Each of the five Federations in the future India should have its own constitution-making body; or there might even be a separate Constituent assembly for each of the existing Provinces. Once the five Federations were established they should agree to delegate their powers in respect of foreign affairs and defence to a common central agency for a period of ten or fifteen years. At the end of this period the Constituent Federations would have the right to secede from the common centre, though it was to be hoped that they would remain together. It depended upon the wishes of each of the Constituent Federations how far they delegated further powers (e.g., in respect of communications or customs) to the common centre; and in theory it was certainly desirable that they should do so. But for the time being the feeling among Muslims against any sort of Federation with Hindu India was so strong that it would be a great concession on their part for them to be brought to agree to a common centre for foreign affairs and defence only.

It can only be conjectured that had Allah Bux Soomro's role been accepted in 1942, the civilian rule would have continued in the western part of the subcontinent without the political role of the military, and no communal-minded government could have gained power in the central and eastern parts of the subcontinent and also a tragic incident like Bangladesh would have been avoided.

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On 14th May the whole province was shocked by the dastardly murder of Mr. Allah Bux Soomro. This was indeed a great loss to Sindh. Whatever may have been our differences in the political field, there could be no denying the fact that late Mr. Allah Bux Soomro was a man with strong conviction, amazing charm and competency in his own sphere of work. After his dismissal, he had grown bitter against the British imperialism. Late Mr. Allah Bux had the charm and grace that could win him friends anywhere. During major period of Assembly politics, I had my differences with him and opposed him unsparingly, but when I remember his good qualities, I cannot help remarking that his was indeed an extra-ordinary talent. By losing him, Sindh lost a great man whose place cannot be easily filled.

G.M. Sayed

Khadim Hussain Soomro is an important member of a dwindling group of writers that can still find the time to exhume and resurrect some of the famous personalities who had enriched the political and cultural life of Sindh from the early years of the twentieth century to the period after Partition. He started his literary forays into the past with an introduction to the father of modern Karachi Harchandrai Vishindas. This was followed by a biography of the great visionary G.M. Sayed, and in 2001 he came out with the biography of one of the most underrated of Sindhi politicians Allah Bux Soomro. Three years later, the reader was presented with the Life and Times of Sayed Sibghatullah Shah, father of the current Pir of Pagaro. The book was aptly titled 'Freedom at the Gallows' and etched the life of a patriot who continuously defied the might of the imperialist enemy. One of the most endearing qualities of Khadim Hussain Soomro is his utter humility and the earnestness with which he approaches his various endeavours. His works, while they will not win any prizes for syntax, style or presentation, nevertheless demonstrate a passion for trying to arrive at the truth coupled with a desire to describe events as they actually occurred. Like his other publications, this book on Allah Bux Soomro is an unbiased assessment of the man behind the myth. It is deeply researched and full of valuable information. The student of the history of Sindh will find much useful material in the volume and a source for further research.

Anwar Mooraj

The message of Allah Bux Soomro is as relevant today as it was in the tumultuous days when the people of the subcontinent launched a struggle to get rid of the British Raj. Some 65 years ago, Allah Bux Soomro, as the Chairman of the Azad Muslim Conference in Delhi, warned the people of the Asian subcontinent and the entire world that, "Aggressive communalism was fatal to the growth of that feeling of brotherliness, good neighborliness and common nationality which were essential, not merely for the acceleration of a common national effort but also for the maintenance of an atmosphere of peace, progress and stability." Allah Bux Soomro was a man of vision and conviction. Had the British policy makers and political groups paid heed to Mr. Soomro's views, the Asian subcontinent would not be engulfed in its present problems of communalism, the perpetual geo-political problem of Kashmir and the autonomous status of the provinces.

Barrister Muhammad Omer Soomro

پڙهندڙ نَسُل . پَ نَ

The Reading Generation

1960 جي ڏهاڪي ۾ عبدالله حسين ”اُداس نسلين“ نالي ڪتاب لکيو. 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ وري ماڻڪَ ”لُڙهندڙ نَسُل“ نالي ڪتاب لکي پنهنجي دورَ جي عڪاسي ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش ڪئي. امداد حُسينيءَ وري 70 واري ڏهاڪي ۾ ئي لکيو:

انڌي ماءُ ڄڻيندي آهي اونڌا سونڌا ٻارَ
ايندڙ نسل سَمورو هوندو گونگا ٻوڙا ٻارَ

هر دور جي نوجوانن کي اُداس، لُڙهندڙ، ڪَڙهندڙ، ڪُڙهندڙ، ٻَرندڙ، ڇُرندڙ، ڪِرَندڙ، اوسيئڙو ڪَندَڙُ، ياڙي، ڪاٺُو، ياڄوڪَڙُ، ڪاوڙيل ۽ وِڙَهندڙ نسلن سان منسوب ڪري سَگهجي ٿو، پَر اسان اِنهن سڀني وِچان ”پڙهندڙ“ نسل جا ڳولائو آهيون. ڪتابن کي ڪاڳر تان کڻي ڪمپيوُٽر جيِ دنيا ۾ آڻڻ، ٻين لفظن ۾ برقي ڪتاب يعنيٰ e-books ناهي ورهائڻ جي وسيلي پڙهندڙ نسل کي وَڌَڻَ، ويجهَڻ ۽ هِڪَ ٻِئي کي ڳولي سَهڪاريِ تحريڪ جي رستي تي آڻِڻَ جي آسَ رکون ٿا.

پڙهندڙ نَسل (پَ نَ) ڪا بہ تنظيمَ ناهي. اُنَ جو ڪو بہ صدر، عُهديدار يا پايو وِجهندڙ نہ آهي. جيڪڏهن ڪو بہ شخص اهڙي دعويٰ ڪري ٿو تہ پَڪَ ڄاڻو تہ اُهو ڪُوڙو آهي. نہ ئي وري پَ نَ جي نالي ڪي پئسا گڏ ڪيا

ويندا. جيڪڏهن ڪو اهڙي ڪوشش ڪري ٿو ته پَڪَ ڄاڻو ته اُهو بِه ڪُوڙو آهي.

جهڙيءَ طَرَح وڻن جا پَنَ ساوا، ڳاڙها، نيلا، پيلا يا ناسي هوندا آهن اَهڙيءَ طرح پڙهندڙ نَسُل وارا پَنَ بہ مختَلِف آهن ۽ هوندا. اُهي ساڳِئي ئي وقت اُداس ۽ پڙهندڙ، ٻَرندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ، سُست ۽ پڙهندڙ يا وِڙهندڙ ۽ پڙهندڙ بہ ٿي سگهن ٿا. ٻين لفظن ۾ پَنَ ڪا خُصوصيِ ۽ تالي لڳل ڪِلَب Exclusive Club نہ آهي.

ڪوشش اها هوندي تہ پَنَ جا سڀ ڪَم ڪار سَهڪاري ۽ رَضاڪار بنيادن تي ٿين، پر ممڪن آهي تہ ڪي ڪم اُجرتي بنيادن تي بہ ٿِين. اهڙي حالت ۾ پَنَ پاڻ هِڪٻِئي جي مدد ڪَرڻ جي اُصولَ هيٺ ڏي وَٺُ ڪندا ۽ غيرتجارتي non-commercial رهندا. پَنَن پاران ڪتابن کي ڊِجيٽائِيز digitize ڪرڻ جي عَملَ مان ڪو بہ مالي فائدو يا نفعو حاصل ڪرڻ جي ڪوشش نہ ڪئي ويندي.

ڪتابن کي ڊِجيٽائِيز ڪرڻ کان پوءِ ٻيو اهم مرحلو وِرهائڻ distribution جو ٿيندو. اِهو ڪم ڪرڻ وارن مان جيڪڏهن ڪو پيسا ڪمائي سگهي ٿو تہ ڀلي ڪمائي، رُڳو پَنَن سان اُن جو ڪو بہ لاڳاپو نہ هوندو.

پَنَن کي کُليل اکرن ۾ صلاح ڏجي ٿي تہ هو وَسَ پٽاندڙ وڌِ کان وَڌِ ڪتاب خريد ڪَري ڪتابن جي ليکَڪَن، ڇپائيندڙن ۽ ڇاپيندڙن کي هِمٿائِن. پر ساڳِئي وقت عِلم حاصل ڪرڻ ۽ ڄاڻ کي ڦهلائڻ جي ڪوشش دوران ڪَنهن بہ رُڪاوٽَ کي نہ مڃن.

شيخ اَيازَ علمَ، ڄاڻَ، سمجهہَ ۽ ڏاهپَ کي گيتَ، بيتَ، سِٽَ، پُڪارَ سان تَشبيهہ ڏيندي انهن سيني کي بَمن، گولين ۽ بارودَ جي مدِ مقابل بيهاريو آهي. اياز چوي ٿو تہ:

گيتَ بہِ ڄڻ گوريلا آهن، جي ويريءَ تي وار ڪَرن ٿا.

... ...

جئن جئن جاڙ وڌي ٿي جَڳَ ۾، هو ٻوليءَ جي آڙ ڇُپن ٿا؛
ريتيءَ تي راتاها ڪن ٿا، موٽي مَنجهہِ پهاڙ ڇُپن ٿا؛

... ...

ڪالههَ هُيا جي سُرخ گُلن جيئن، اڄڪلهہ نيلا پيلا آهن؛
گيتَ بہِ ڄڻ گوريلا آهن........

... ...

هي بيتُ اَٿي، هي بَم ـ گولو، جيڪي بہ ڪٽين، جيڪي بہ ڪٽين!
مون لاءِ ٻنهي ۾ فَرَقُ نہ آ، هي بيتُ بہ بَمَ جو ساٿي آ،
جنهن رِڻَ ۾ رات ڪَيا راڙا، تنهن هَڏَ ۽ چَمَ جو ساٿي آ ـ

اِن حسابَ سان اڻچاڻائي ڪي پاڻَ تي اِهو سوچي مَڙهڻ تہ ”هاڻي ويڙهہ ۽ عمل جو دور آهي، اُن ڪري پڙهڻ تي وقت نہ وڃايو“ ناداني‌ءَ جي نشاني آهي.

پَنَن جو پڙهڻ عام ڪِتابي ڪيڙن وانگر رُڳو نِصابي ڪتابن تائين محدود نہ هوندو. رڳو نصابي ڪتابن ۾ پاڻ کي قيد ڪري ڇڏڻ سان سماج ۽ سماجي حالتن تان نظر ڪڄي ويندي ۽ نتيجي طور سماجي ۽ حڪومتي پاليسيون policies اڻچاڻن ۽ نادانن جي هٿن ۾ رهنديون. پَنَ نِصابي ڪتابن سان گڏوگڏ ادبي، تاريخي، سياسي، سماجي، اقتصادي، سائنسي ۽ ٻين ڪتابن کي پڙهي سماجي حالتن کي بهتر بڻائڻ جي ڪوشش ڪندا.

پڙهندڙ نَسُل جا پَنَ سيني کي **چوء، چاالاءِ ۽ ڪينئن** جهڙن سوالن کي هر بَيانَ تي لاڳو ڪرڻ جي ڪوشَ ڏين ٿا ۽ انهن تي ويچار ڪرڻ سان گڏ جوابَ ڳولڻ کي پنهنجو حق، فرض ۽ اڻٽر گهرج unavoidable necessity سمجهندي ڪتابن کي پاڻ پڙهڻ ۽ ٻين کان وڌ ماڻهن تائين پهچائڻ جي ڪوشش جديد ترين طريقن وسيلي ڪرڻ جو ويچار رکن ٿا.

توهان به پڙهڻ، پڙهائڻ ۽ ڦهلائڻ جي اِن سهڪاري تحريڪ ۾ شامل ٿي سگهو ٿا، بَس پنهنجي اوسي پاسي ۾ ڏِسو، هر قسم جا ڳاڙها توڙي نيرا، ساوا توڙي پيلا پن ضرور نظر اچي ويندا.

وڻ وڻ کي مون ياڪِي پائي چيو تہ "منهنجا ياءُ
پهتو منهنجي من ۾ تنهنجي پَنَ پَنَ جو پڙلاءُ".
- اياز (ڪي جو بيجل بوليو)